

THE METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING IN ISLAM:
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE TRADITIONAL
EDUCATIONAL METHODS IN MALAYSIA

by

Che Omar bin Haji Awang

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the traditional Islamic educational institution (*pondok*) in Malaysia. The aim of this thesis is to analyse the existing *pondok* educational system and to suggest changes which need to be introduced in order to make it relevant to the modern needs without thereby compromising the traditional values. The study starts with a brief discussion about the nature of knowledge in Islam. This is followed by a discussion about the origins of the methodology of teaching with an analysis of the terms used in Islamic education, the methodologies of Gabriel and the Prophet. In Chapter Two, discussion pertaining to the theories and practices of the methodology of teaching is presented through examining the various aspects of teaching which could be discerned from the Qur'ān and relating them to the practical and customary spheres. Chapter Three presents the influence of traditional Islamic education on the Malays, giving considerable attention to the manners in which the Malays pursued their religious study. Chapter Four attempts to examine the *pondok* system by studying the daily and educational life of the institution. In Chapter Five a critical analysis of the methodology of the teaching at the *pondok* is presented along with the recommended changes of which the *pondok* system as a whole stands in need for its future survival. This is followed by a conclusion, a bibliography and appendices.

TRANSLITERATION

Consonants

Arabic	Symbol	Arabic	Symbol	Arabic	Symbol
ء	'	ز	z	ق	q
ب	b	س	s	ك	k
ت	t	ش	sh	ل	l
ث	th	ص	ṣ	م	m
ج	j	ض	ḍ	ن	n
ح	ḥ	ط	ṭ	ه	h
خ	kh	ظ	ẓ	و	w
د	d	ع	ʿ	ي	y
ذ	dh	غ	gh		
ر	r	ف	f		

Vowels and Diphthongs

Long Vowel	Short Vowel	Diphthongs
ا ā	ا a	او aw
و ū	و u	اي ay
ي ī	ي i	

Usage

- i. The word *ulama'* in Malay can be either singular or plural form. The use of the word in the main body of the thesis is according to the context. However, when it is used as an Arabic word it follows Arabic syntax and denotes the plural form.
- ii. Authors or writers of Malay books or articles are referred to according to their forenames since Malays do not have surnames and are known to people by their forenames. However, if their writings are in English, the surname system is applied (using the father's name as a surname).
- iii. Names of Arab writers who write in Arabic will be given full Arabic transliteration. Otherwise, they will follow the printed transliteration. For instance, Azmi or Azami instead of al-A^ʿẓamī, though they all refer to the same person.
- iv. In the case of similar surnames, the author's forenames will be mentioned in abbreviation after their surnames. For instance, ^ʿAlī, M.K. for Muḥammad Kurd ^ʿAlī. However, if a writer has many writings, these will be referred to in short forms. For instance, al-Attas, *Concept* instead of the full title *The Concept of Islamic Education*. In this situation, *ibid.* or *op. cit.* do not apply. The short form is mentioned in the footnotes wherever appropriate.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AH.....After *Hijrah*

b.bin (son of)

BSOAS.....*Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*

ed.....edited by or editor

EI.....*Encyclopaedia of Islam*

IC.....*Islamic Culture*

IQ.....*Islamic Quarterly*

IS.....*Islamic Studies*

JMBRAS.....*Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*

JPI.....*Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*

MW.....*Muslim World*

HI.....*Hamdard Islamicus*

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, do hereby, truly, declare that this thesis has been written by me and does not represent the work of any other persons.

.....

Che Omar bin Haji Awang

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

I

1. Statement of the Problem

In Islam, education is considered the most important element after the faith. It has never been isolated in the life of the believer. Thus, it is one of the central concerns of the Muslim, regardless of time and space.

Generally speaking, Muslim societies throughout the world are aware that they are in need of their own form of education that will shape personalities according to the teachings of Islam based on God's revelation, both *al-matlū* and *ghayr al-matlū*¹. They are in need of a thorough and comprehensive educational system whereby the student's values, skills and awareness of himself, his society and his environment are well blended in a correct balance and thus produce a correctly-balanced student. The quest for a truly Islamic system of education has never ceased and is particularly urgent amidst the rising tide of Islam worldwide.

Muslim countries all over the world are often perceived as practising a dualistic system of education, namely secular and religious education. The

¹. Scholars of Islam consider the Qur'ān as *wahy al-matlū* whereby mere reading is considered a form of worship (*'ibādah*) and hadith or the tradition of the Prophet Muḥammad is *wahy ghayr al-matlū*. Burton translates the former "recited inspiration" and the latter "non-recited inspiration". See John Burton, *The Collection of the Qur'ān*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 54.

secular has become the core and pivot of the system. The religious, grouped into several types of traditional indigenous systems, is considered secondary to the secular system. This dichotomy in education has been a focus and concern of Muslim scholars and educationists to the extent that, in 1977, they held the first world conference on Muslim education in Mecca, organized by King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah. The main aim of this conference was to remove the dichotomy of religious and secular education systems that are at present operative in Muslim countries. It is hoped that with a clear picture of the concepts and attitudes of religion and education, the aim of Islamic education in producing the *the good and righteous man* who worships Allah in the true sense of the terms will build up the structure of the Muslim's earthly life according to the *Shari'ah* (Islamic law) and employ it to reinforce his faith. Every system of education embodies a particular philosophy which emanates from a particular concept, from which it cannot be isolated. The Muslim cannot have a philosophy or an educational policy which is based on a concept not identical with the Islamic teachings. Thus, the sources of knowledge according to the Islamic concept fall into two categories; divine revelation and the human intellect and its tools which are in constant interaction with the physical universe on the levels of observation, contemplation, experimentation and application. Man is free to do as he pleases subject to the condition that he remains fully committed to the Qur'ān and the *Shari'ah*².

². Syed Muhammad al-Naquib al-Attas (ed.), *Aims and Objectives of Islamic Education*, (Jeddah: King Abdulaziz University, 1979), forward, pp. v-vii.

Among other things the conference touched on curricula and teachers' education, and the papers on these issues were compiled by Professor Muhammad Hamid al-Afendi and Professor Nabi Ahmad Baloch. Of course they touch on the purpose of educating teachers and teaching learning procedures³. In other words their concern is the importance of methodology of teaching in Islam. This idea no doubt had a great significance for the development of the educational system in Malaysia.

The *pondok* system of education seems, on the one hand, to be a true picture of the Islamic system. In its traditional form, it was considered the best method to inculcate Islamic values and consciousness in the people. It had influenced the life of the Malays for generations by constantly providing a powerful moral concern that maintained order in society until the present day. On the other hand, there is a serious question concerning its relevance to the needs of a developing society. The non-availability of the so-called non-religious subjects coupled with the traditional methods applied at the *pondok* centres prevented them from securing the sympathy of the government from colonial times onward. As a result, the *pondok* system was denied the opportunity of becoming the backbone of the present national system. Its graduates are denied employment opportunities with the government because

³. Especially articles written by Muhammad al-Aroosi, "Islamic Curriculum and the Teacher", and N.A. Baloch, "Reconstruction of Teacher Education in Islamic Society", in M. H. Al-Afendi and N.A. Baloch (eds.), *Curriculum and Teacher Education*, (Jeddah: King Abdulaziz University, 1980), pp. 120-138 and 161-174 respectively.

its curriculum is considered weak and it cannot provide students for worldly purposes.

In contrast, in the past *pondok* education played a very vital role in shaping the life of the people, be they laymen or the elite group of the palaces. Some of the *Tok Gurus* were appointed to key positions in the government, to the extent that there were cases where they were appointed chief ministers in several Malay states⁴. Sadly at the present day the *pondok* has lost its grip and with it the people's confidence in its system.

As a result, people in Malaysia are now in a dilemma; whether to get the deeper religious knowledge which lays stress on *akhlāq* and a strong commitment to Islam at the *pondok* or to forsake it in order to achieve merely worldly gains. Though the *pondok* system is the less popular choice, it can be revitalized if its curricular aspects are given proper attention. The syllabus, the books and on top of that the *methodology of teaching* which should have a great

⁴. For example, Baginda Umar Sultan of Terengganu, who was crowned in 1839, appointed Syed Md. Zayn al-Abidin (Syed Zain) as his chief minister after the demise of his first chief minister, Tengku Ismail. Later, Sultan Zainal Abidin III appointed Haji Ngah @ Muhammad bin Yusuf, an *ulama'* as his chief minister with the appellation of Dato Seri Amar Diraja. Haji Nik Mahmud bin Haji Wan Ismail, a good friend and a son of Tok Kenali's old teacher and an *ulama'* was appointed as chief minister by the Sultan of Kelantan with the appellation of Dato' Perdana Mentri Paduka Raja. See Wan Husin Wan Embong, "Peranan dan Pengaruh Tok Ku Tuan Besar", in Muhammad Abu Bakar (ed.), *Ulama Terengganu: Suatu Sorotan*, (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications and Distributors, 1991), p. 140; Fatimah Abdullah, "Datok Seri Amar Diraja Haji Ngah @ Muhammad bin Yusuf: Ulama Sebagai Pembuat Dasar dan Pentadbir", in Muhammad Abu Bakar (ed.), *Ulama Terengganu: Suatu Sorotan*, (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications and Distributors, 1991), pp. 203, 207 and 209. In the case of Kelantan, see Abdullah al-Qari b. Haji Salleh, "Tok Kenali: His Life and Influence" in William R. Roff (ed.), *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 94.

effect in moulding the individual pattern of thinking could be revived, taking into account modern and advanced educational technologies and discoveries, in order to bring the *pondok* graduates to the same or a higher level compared to the graduates of secular education. Having this in mind, we find that certain *pondok* centres are now revitalizing their roles and varying the methodology of teaching in order to regain these long neglected dimensions of education⁵.

2. The Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this study is to examine and critically analyse the prevailing methods of teaching at the *pondok* in order to clarify the development of *pondok* education and establish the details of the learning process and its wider relationship with Islamic educational concepts, particularly those of the study circle or *halaqah*. More specifically, we wish to see whether or not its practices are in line with Qur'ānic teachings and Islamic practices in the past which were contributive, innovative, and comprehensive

⁵. This process was started by Tuan Hussain bin Muhammad Nasir al-Mas'udi al-Banjari well-known as Tuan Hussain Kedah in 1934, and his institution was officially run as a *madrasah* in 1935 when his son, Haji Ahmad, took over his place as the principal. Prior to that he had opened up six other *pondok* centres throughout the state of Kedah. He was considered the most successful *pondok Tok guru*. At Temoh, Perak, one of three teachers, Haji Mohd. Surur, in Pondok Madrasah Saadiyah-Salihiah had started the new methodology in teaching at the *Pondok* almost at the same time as Tuan Hussain. See Halim Man, "Madrasah Khairiah al-Islamiah Pokok Sena", in Khoo Kay Kim et.al. (eds.), *Pendidikan di Malaysia Dahulu dan Sekarang*, (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980), pp. 104, 107-108; Haji Mustafa Mohd Isa, *Alim Ulama di Negeri Kedah: Peranan Dua Orang Tokoh Dalam Perkembangan Persuratan Jawi*, Ph. D. Thesis, Science University of Malaysia, 1990, pp. 402-403. In the case of Pondok Madrasah Saadiyah-Salihiah, refer to Badriyah Haji Salleh, *Kampung Haji Salleh dan Madrasah Saadiyah-Salihiah 1914-1959*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1984), pp. 40-43.

in nature⁶. This research will, it is hoped, provide a clear idea of those *pondok* practices and activities which are now considered by certain scholars and modernists⁷ to be non-progressive, and are still a controversial issue in the Malay milieu.

3. The Scope of the Research

For this purpose I have arranged my thesis into two parts: historical-theoretical and practical-operational. The first part contains two chapters, Chapter One and Chapter Two, while the second part comprises the three remaining chapters namely Chapters Three, Four and Five.

As a basis of discussion, attention will be drawn to the early practices and activities of the methodology of teaching in Islam which is an account of their origins as propagated by the Prophet Muḥammad. Questions on how he was taught by the angel Gabriel and subsequently how he taught his companions and disciples will be looked into, followed by the practices of the later Muslim generations. These historical expositions will demonstrate the idea of teaching inherited by Muslims from one generation to another.

⁶. Nakosteen holds the idea that Islamic education, at one stage in the past, was very progressive in nature. It combined religious and vocational knowledge and aimed at practical training. See Mehdi Nakosteen, *History of Islamic Origins of Western Education A.D. 800-1350*, (Colorado: University of Colorado Press, 1964), p. 42.

⁷. Faisal Othman, "Pendidikan Islam: Konsep dan Realiti", in *Pendidikan Islam Malaysia*, (Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1992), p. 25; See also Bayard Dodge, *Muslim Education in Medieval Times*, (Washington D. C.: The Middle East Institute, 1962), part 11, on the Development of Subjects of the Curriculum.

Chapter Two will seek to explain the situation of Muslims in their endeavour to pursue knowledge, situated as they were between the ideals and the practicalities. Although new theories were introduced, some still subscribed to the so-called "origins of methodology" the spirit of which was misconstrued. As a consequence of this, Islam began to decline after the end of the eleventh century, but the number of its schools of higher learning increased and flourished. Various methods of teaching were introduced, some of which caused unfortunate results for Muslim educational institutions, such that they became contented with being *muqallidūn* instead of *mujtahidūn*⁸. Muslims became rigid and non-productive in spite of having much information about religious knowledge. Chapter Three, being the first chapter of part two, tries to explore the influence of Islam on the life of the Malays in the past, thereby enabling the Malays to adopt a different mode of thought as opposed to their previous patterns of life which were deeply rooted in a milieu of Hinduism and animism. Islam created a conducive environment of knowledge, and motivated Malays to acquire various types of education now known as traditional education. This became the foundation for the emergence of *pondok* education, or *madrasah* as in the case of Medieval Islam. Chapter Four is devoted to portraying the practices and activities of the teaching-learning

⁸. *Mujtahid* pl. *mujtahidūn* is the one who exercises his intellectual striving while *muqallid* pl. *muqallidūn* is the one who accepts the intermediate authority. See the discussions in Chapter Two, 2.5.7., 2.6.1., vii, viii and 2.6.4. For further discussion see Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn*, (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, n.d.), pp. 478-479; ‘AbdulḤamīd Aḥmad AbūSulaymān, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*, (Herndon, Virginia: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1993), pp. 4-6 (hereafter cited as *Crisis*) and Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 1980), especially p. 58.

process at *pondok* centres. Many of the earliest activities are probed into in order to prove that the problem of the present *pondok* system is centred around its curriculum in general and its manners of teaching which are projected as Islamic, but which in actual fact are "purely religious" in nature⁹. Thus we will determine the strengths and the weaknesses of the *pondok* system in Chapter Five. Each and every aspect will be taken care of and its linkage with methods of teaching at the centre will be looked at. In the light of the practices and problems disclosed in the *pondok* system we shall offer ideas to revitalize its methodology of teaching in order for it to regain its popularity.

All in all, my thesis will consist of five main sections excluding the Introductory Chapter where discussion pertaining to the nature of knowledge is dealt with, in the order explained above. In summary, they are as follows:

Introductory Chapter

Chapter One,

Methodology of Teaching: the Origins.

Chapter Two,

Methodology of Teaching: Theories and Practices

Chapter Three,

⁹. See the definition of pure religious subjects on p. 21.

Chapter Four,

Methodology of Teaching: *Pondok* Experiences.

Chapter Five,

Methodology of Teaching at *Pondok*: An Analysis.

4. The Expected Results

Among other things the expected results can be summarised as follows:

i. *Pondok* education has its strengths as well as its weaknesses. The strengths lie in the practice of an integrated approach (*uslūb muwaḥḥad*) in teaching and its struggle to perform and practise Islamic teachings rendered in honesty in order to seek the pleasure of God, which thus leads to producing ‘*ulamā’*’ who act as *du‘āh*¹⁰. Noble manners or high moral standards (*makārim al-akhlāq*) is their main concern. A good relationship between teachers and students is another positive dimension which is lacking sometimes in the conventional modern educational system.

ii. As for their weaknesses we find that the method of teaching relies mostly on reading texts and accepting the teacher’s ideas without much questioning. Though in some cases questions are allowed, this aspect is quite

¹⁰. *Dā‘in* pl. *du‘āh* is the one who calls for the practice of Islamic teachings i.e. to be obedient to God, by which one could reach the Divine precinct. Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 3:547; Sayyid Quṭb, op. cit., 5:2872.

superficial, and its only objective is to obtain further explanation of the *sharh* previously made by the *Tok Guru*. Memorization is their main concern and vehicle to gain knowledge, and *fiqh* (jurisprudence) is their main objective. This is obvious in their discussions of any subject matter, in which *fiqh* is incorporated as much as possible. Reasoning is not fully developed in the process of learning. Excessive respect for the teacher can hinder achievement in the pursuit of knowledge. To a certain extent, students indeed venerate the *shaykh* of the *pondok*. The fact that the stress is solely on traditional religious knowledge by using a traditional approach may lead students into a mental and educational crisis¹¹. No facilities or educational aids are involved in the learning process other than blackboards and chalk. There is no proper administration¹². Much of the time the final decision on matters related to the *pondok* comes from the chief *guru*. There is no stress on physical needs except for a few movements during the prayer and the agriculture programmes in the less typical modernised *pondoks*.

5. Significances and Benefits.

The results of the research are expected to help promote the

¹¹. AbūSulaymān, *Crisis*, p. 5. See also discussions in notes 8 and 12.

¹². The common administration of *pondoks* revolved around the authority of the *Tok Guru* assisted by several aides known as *Kepala Muṭāla'ah* as mentioned by Haji Mustafa. However, the most well-known *pondok* in Malaysia today, Pondok Pasir Tumbuh officially known as al-Madrasah al-Dīniyyah al-Bakriyyah in Kelantan, has a better system and so does Pondok Moden Kerandang, Besut, Terengganu. Others may not have it at all. See Haji Mustafa Mohd Isa, *op. cit.*, p. 395; Azmi Omar, "In Quest of an Islamic Ideal of Education: A Study of the Role of the Traditional Pondok Institution in Malaysia", Ph. D. Dissertation, Temple University, 1993, p. 161. Interview with Tok Guru Haji Najmuddin, 05/06/93.

advancement of attitudes of students in the *pondok* of Qur'ānic studies. Muslims are supposed to be *mujāhids* in a wider sense and *jihād*¹³ is an attitude of a progressive Muslim. Elements of rigidity, closed-mindedness and conformity should not be allowed to creep into the minds of Muslims. Freedom in thinking, active research and contemplation and sharp observation must be instigated and propagated. This will help the nation builders to introduce certain constructive ideas in educational policies that could help reduce a number of social problems especially among youngsters and teenagers, and also malpractices in managerial sectors.

In terms of the *pondok's* educational structure, adjustment and modernization should be initiated by the government to ensure their position in the world and to adapt them to the realities of life. This is an important and valuable task, since their number all over the country is not small.

If they are made aware of the other dimensions of knowledge they could be more productive than ordinary schools, since their students are more concerned with the inner human being and strong enough to endure the pains

¹³. *Jihād* should not be looked on as a sign of war but should be understood as a struggle towards obtaining the pleasure of Allah (*marḍāt Allah*) such as the struggle in fighting with one's own self (*nafs*) and in spending one's beloved belongings and wealth in His path. Literally, it means "earnest effort". In Islam it is the duty of every Muslim to put forth his maximal potentials and efforts in word and deed for the sake of keeping Islam dominant in the Muslim society and propagating Islam among the non-Muslims. The Muslim community also has to establish its policies, inside and outside, for the same purpose. See *Sūrat al-ʿAnkabūt*(29):6, 29; and *al-Tawbah*(9):20; Majid Irsan al-Kaylani, "Ibn Taymiya on Education: An Analytical Study of Ibn Taymiya's Views on Education", Ph. D. Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1981, p. 78.

of life. They do not aim for worldly rewards in their endeavours for most of them focus on sincerity (*ikhhlāṣ*) and achieving the pleasure (*riḍā*) of God. This is the prime and most valuable asset belonging to this group of people. Obedience is another precious thing inculcated in their life-style which, if it is systematically utilized, can be of benefit not only to their society but to the nation at large.

6. Review of Related Literature

So far little has been written on the methodology of teaching in Islam and even less on contemporary methods of teaching from Qur'ānic perspectives. No comprehensive attempt has been made to describe an Islamic methodology of teaching which incorporates the two basic aspects of Islamic education, namely the philosophical and historical part which is theoretical in nature on the one hand, and the methodological which is practical in nature on the other.

Generally speaking, none of the existing works can be regarded as a ready-made model which is suitable for application at any learning institution, be it elementary, secondary or tertiary in level.

Most writers lay more stress on conceptual, historical and philosophical aspects of methodology of teaching in Islam. Aḥmad Shalabī in his *Tārīkh al-Tarbiyah al-Islāmiyyah* (later on entitled *al-Tarbiyah wa al-Ta'lim fī al-Fikr al-*

Islāmī, Jawānib al-Tārīkh wa al-Nuẓum wa al-Falsafah), touches very little on the methodology. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm Ghunaymah has shed some light on the methodology of teaching from historical perspective in his book *Tārīkh al-Jāmi‘āt al-Islāmiyyah al-Kubrā*. Aḥmad Fu‘ād al-Ahwānī in his *al-Tarbiyah fī al-Islām*- although he devotes a certain amount of discussion to the methodology of teaching- discusses it from within the ideas set up by two well-known classical Islamic educationists, namely al-Qābisī and Ibn Saḥnūn.

The researcher has obtained some very helpful ideas from ‘Umar al-Tūmī al-Shaybānī’s book, *Falsafat al-Tarbiyah al-Islāmiyyah*, which is considered the most advanced in terms of comprehensiveness from the Qur’ānic perspective. Similarly, al-Khalīl Abū al-‘Aynayn in his *Falsafat al-Tarbiyah al-Islāmiyyah* has discussed this subject quite extensively. Ṣāliḥ ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ‘Abd al-Majīd wrote a book entitled *al-Tarbiyah wa Ṭuruq al-Tadrīs* which introduces modern ideas of the methodology of teaching. On the whole, however, the Qur’ānic perspective of teaching has been neglected. However, writings from the International Institute of Islamic Thought have contributed a great deal to making Muslim educationists aware of the importance of applying these ideas in society. ‘AbdulḤamīd Aḥmad AbūSulaymān for instance, though he does not discuss a specific methodology of teaching from the Qur’ānic outlook, has produced a number of ideas about this matter and has challenged the ‘ulamā’ with their "imitative historical

solution" approach with his book, *Crisis in the Muslim Mind*¹⁴ in order to solve the problem of the decadence of the Muslim *ummah*¹⁵.

The earliest research on Islamic education which touches on the issue of methodology as far as the researcher is aware is an MA degree written by A.H. Fahmy in 1939 in the University of Birmingham. He mentions in his thesis, *The Educational Ideas of the Muslims in the Middle Ages*, types of method suggested and employed in the Qur'ān. However, the discussion is narrative in nature and needs to be analysed and restructured in order to facilitate its application in daily life. Another scholar, Abdul Raḥmān Ṣāliḥ Abdullāh in his *Educational Theory: A Qur'ānic Outlook* has given great attention to this matter in the last chapter of his book, but yet the discussion does not cover all aspects of the methodology of teaching.

The researcher acknowledges that the challenge which he faced and the questions put to him by the Rector of the International Islamic University of Malaysia in an interview for appointment as a lecturer in early 1989 prompted him to choose the topic in the hope of solving the problem of methodology of teaching especially from the Qur'ānic perspective. Though the aspect with

¹⁴. What he means by "imitative historical solution" is that the approach is a traditional one which disregards temporal, local, and ummatic (Muslim *ummah*) considerations. AbūSulaymān, *Crisis*, p. 3-4.

¹⁵. 'AbdulḤamīd Aḥmad Abū Sulaymān, "The Islamization of Knowledge: A New Approach Toward Reform of Contemporary Knowledge" in *Islam, Source and Purpose of Knowledge*, (Herndon, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1988), p. 94.

which he deals does not cover all the problems and challenges, nonetheless, it will hopefully help solve part of them.

Within the Malay sphere, Azmi Omar in his Ph. D thesis, "In the Quest of an Islamic Ideal of Education: A Study of the Role of the Traditional *Pondok* Institution in Malaysia" (Temple University, 1993) and Hasan Madmarn in his PhD dissertation, "Traditional Muslim Institutions in Southern Thailand: A Critical Study of Islamic Education and Arabic Influence in the *Pondok* and *Madrasah* Systems of Patani" (The University of Utah, 1990) have contributed a great deal in combining the conceptual and historical aspects on one hand and the practical on the other. Azmi, especially, touches on the nature of the *pondok* as well as the life there. A case study which has been carried out on a specific *pondok* in Kelantan helps us in understanding its nature, and when he ends up with a critical appraisal of its impact based on the Malaysian National Educational System, he tries to combine these two systems. However, the discussion on the methodology is not thoroughly probed into. Hasan Madmarn on the other hand has given due attention to the daily routine life of students at *pondoks* in Southern Thailand in his fifth chapter but it is still in a very general manner. It is more or less a report of what is happening at the *pondok*. Extensive discussion has been focused on the contributions of the work of 'ulamā', their writing, translating and publishing activities, the role and influence of *Kitāb Jawi* with their Arabic influence and the role played by the Siamese government in order to change the nature of traditional schools to one

which will succumb to the government system. Equally important is Ismail Haji Ishak's MA thesis entitled "The Malay and Islamic Traditional Educational System from the Mid 19th Century to the Present Day with Special Reference to the *Pondok* Schools in Kedah", (University of Aberdeen, 1990). He explains extensively the *pondok* system and situation, and its relationship to other traditional Islamic institutions. Some suggestions on reform are given at the end of his research with the hope that the *pondok* institution will survive amidst the rapid developments in educational technology. Though his discussion is quite lengthy, he pays little attention to the methodology of teaching. Haji Mustafa Mohd Isa in his Ph.D thesis entitled "Alim Ulama Di Negeri Kedah: Peranan Dua Orang Tokoh Dalam Perkembangan Persuratan Jawi" (USM, P. Pinang, 1990), places more stress on the contribution of two prominent scholars in Kedah to Malay literature and touches a little on the *pondok* in his seventh chapter. Haji Ismail Awang has written a thesis for his MA entitled *Pengajian dan Tafsir al-Qur'ān* (Kota Bharu: Dian Darulnaim Sdn. Bhd., 1987). Though his research is on Qur'ānic studies, his discussions on the methodology of teaching and the work done by teachers in the *pondok* are rather brief. Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud in his book, *The Concept of Knowledge and Its Implications for Education in A Developing Country* helps the researcher to get an idea of what we can expect from our practical efforts on the methodology of teaching. A chapter on the educational implications for Malaysia is very helpful. Shafie Abu Bakar in his MA thesis, "Institusi Shaykh 'Abdul-Malik Bin Abdullāh (Satu Corak Pengajian Tradisi di Trengganu) Dan

Kitab-Kitab Padanya" (UKM, Bangi, 1976/77) has discussed this in his fourth chapter under the sub-topic "Kaedah-Kaedah Pengajian Pada Zaman Tradisi" (Methodology of Education in the Traditional Period). However, the discussion is more on the historical part of the teaching and it is presented in a narrative manner. Types of traditional education are discussed extensively based on traditional practices. No evaluation has been made from the Qur'ānic point of view.

Apart from what has been mentioned, there are numerous articles and working papers which could be benefited from. Among others are "Malay Society 1874-1920s" and "Perkembangan Pelajaran Agama Islam" both by Professor Khoo Kay Kim, "Pelajaran Pondok di Kelantan" by Rahim Abdullah, "Islam dan Masyarakat Kota Bharu di Antara Tahun 1900-1940" and "Lima Orang Tokoh Ulama di Negeri Kelantan" by Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Hassan, and "Pengajian Hadith di Institusi Pondok: Satu Kajian Kes di Daerah Baling Kedah" by Mohd Napiiah. Robert L. Winzeler has written an article entitled "Traditional Islamic Schools in Kelantan". Muḥammad ʿUthmān al-Muḥammady wrote about *pondok* in *JPI* entitled "Pondok Education as Indigenous Education" and other articles in the journal *Pengasuh*. Other writers include Mahmud Mamat and Awang Had Salleh.

All in all, from what has been mentioned above we can conclude that the sources are complementary to each other and thus for the purpose of this

study, they need to be rearranged in accordance with the Islamic teachings and practices¹⁶.

7. Research Methodology

The researcher has adopted two methods in his effort to achieve the research objectives. The first and foremost is *the Historical Method* which is utilised most of the time.

This method can largely be approached from materials which he has collected during his research work. To obtain historical information, the researcher has relied heavily on *Library* research which is considered the most basic, especially for the second and the third chapters of the thesis.

Interviews have been conducted with many groups including some great figures of the *pondok* world, though some of them are no longer active in *pondok* activities either due to old age or because their *pondok* centres are now defunct. The contents of the interviews touched on many aspects related to the *pondok* starting from the historical background of the *pondok* up to their daily routine which involved the methodology of teaching. The researcher has tried his best to get their evaluation of the overall performance of the *pondok* in connection with the learning process and aspects of life at *pondok*.

¹⁶. See the discussion in Chapter Five, 5.3. and 5.9.2., ii, a, b, c, d, e.

Observation has been carried out by the researcher on the process of learning as well as their daily life. Thus the Exploratory Method is involved.

To sum up, objective one, objective two and a part of objective three of the research are purely historical in nature, and therefore Library Research is the most suitable. Books, theses and other related printed materials were obtained from public libraries, bookshops and stores, publishers, government publications and even personal collections. The second part of objective three, and objective four, and part of objective five, were achieved mainly through interviews and observation though at times Library Research has been helpful. The second part of objective five is actually a result of research which was based on a combination of both methods.

8. Definition of Some Terms used

The term *madrasah* is sometimes used for a separate entity. It refers, in most cases, to a more systematic school which is run along the lines of the government educational system. However, some *pondok* centres are given the name *madrasah*, though in actual cases they are traditional institutions, such as Madrasah Ahmadiyah which was Pondok Bunut Payong, al-Madrasah al-Dīniyyah al-Bakriyyah which is Pondok Pasir Tumboh, both in Kelantan, Madrasah al-Khairiah al-Islamiah which was Pondok Pokok Sena, Kepala Batas, Seberang Perai. At other times the word *madrasah* is applied to a building where the *Tok Guru* has his regular classes or circles. It can be in

between the *pondok* (hut) buildings at a *pondok* centre or a totally separate building specially built for the purpose of teaching and praying, without any huts surrounding it, such as Madrasah Balai Besar, Madrasah Kubur Besar, both in Dungun, Terengganu, and Madrasah Padang Midin, Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu. This type of *madrasah* has a similar function to a mosque, *balai* or *surau*.

Surau is a term which refers to a place where the regular five daily prayers are offered. It is smaller than a mosque in size and no Friday prayer (*Ṣalāt al-Jum'ah*) is offered here¹⁷. In other words it is a small prayer house. Sometimes it is used for religious activities such as Qur'ānic classes and other rituals¹⁸.

Tok Guru is an epithet which is a derivative of the original *guru* of the ancient culture. The first word *tok* or *tuk* is an appellation used to show reverence equivalent to Sir in English¹⁹. In the Malay milieu, the *Tok Guru* denotes a traditional teacher. He is normally trained in the traditional institutions, first in *pondok* and later on perhaps in the Masjid al-Ḥarām in

¹⁷. R. A. Kern, "The Origin of the Malay Surau" *JMBRAS* Vol. 29, Part 1, 1959, Singapore, p. 180. See also p. 231.

¹⁸. Ismail Haji Ishak, "The Malay and Islamic Traditional Educational System from the Mid 19th Century to the Present Day with Special Reference to the *Pondok* schools in Kedah", MA Thesis (University of Aberdeen, 1990), p. 46; See also Sobri Salamon, "Falsafah Pendidikan Islam dan Dasar Pelajaran Malaysia" in Haron Din and Sobri Salamon, *Masalah Pendidikan Islam di Malaysia*, (Kuala Lumpur: al-Rahmaniah, 1988), p. 28.

¹⁹. Omar, op. cit., p. 134.

Mecca or in Masjid al-Azhar in Cairo. He is usually trained under certain specialized *shaykhs* and becomes a qualified professional master of certain subjects, though he has not been awarded a particular degree in the modern sense²⁰. In some other cases if the epithet *tok* is attached to the name of a specific *Tok Guru*, for instance Tok Haji Yusuf, it signals a more remote and less accessible *Tok Guru*²¹.

Religious subjects or pure religious subjects are subjects which are transmission-based (*naqlī*)²². They are also called transmitted sciences. They deal with *sharī'ah* or *shar'īyyāt*, such as Qur'ān and its exegesis, *fiqh* and its *uṣūl*, *hadīth* and its *uṣūl* and so on. They also deal with other related subjects such as the sciences of language, grammar, phonetics and the like²³. Since these sciences are essential prerequisites (*ālāh*) in order to understand the transmitted sciences, they are called auxiliary sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ālīyyah*)²⁴. Generally speaking these are sciences taught at *pondok* centres. The other group of sciences are called acquired sciences which are intellect-based (*ʿaqlī*) to

²⁰. Hasan Madmarn, "Traditional Muslim Institutions in Southern Thailand: A Critical Study of Islamic Education and Arabic Influence in the *Pondok* and *Madrasah* Systems of Pattani", Ph.D Dissertation, (The University of Utah, 1990), pp. 120-121.

²¹. Judith Nagata, *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), p. 47.

²². In *pondok* milieu it is called *pelajaran Agama/Ugama*. Ibn Khaldūn called them traditional conventional sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-naqliyyah al-waḍʿiyyah*). Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., p. 482. See also ʿAbd al-Amīr Shams al-Dīn, *al-Fikr al-Tarbawī ʿInd Ibn Khaldūn wa Ibn al-Azraq* (Beirut: Dār Iqra', 1986), p. 55.

²³. Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., p. 482.

²⁴. *ibid.*, p. 593.

which man is guided by his own reasoning power²⁵.

II

9. Knowledge in Islam

In speaking about the teaching and learning process in Islam one cannot afford to ignore the most basic element of the process, knowledge (*‘ilm*).

Even though discussion on the nature of knowledge has been undertaken in varying details by many scholars in the past, the researcher feels that the inclusion of such a discussion is a prefatorial necessity for any deliberation on an educational system. This section, therefore, focuses briefly on issues pertaining to knowledge and its essential relation with *‘amal*, since the aim of seeking knowledge is to inculcate good values and noble manners (*makārim al-akhlāq*). *Akhlāq* is considered the pivot in Islamic education, regardless of whether it is looked at from the point of view of teaching or the learning process, to which the revelation was dedicated²⁶. True knowledge must provide room for *akhlāq* and enhance it in all dimensions of life. It will lead its possessor to the right path where praiseworthy attributes are upheld.

²⁵. Ibn Khaldūn called them philosophical sciences (*al-‘ulūm al-ḥikmiyyah al-falsafiyyah*). Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., p. 482.

²⁶. In one of the traditions the Prophet Muḥammad says, *Bu‘īthtu li utammim makārim al-akhlāq*, which means I am sent(to the people) to establish praiseworthy traits. See Muḥammad ‘Aḥiyyah al-Abrāshī, *al-Tarbiyah al-Islāmiyyah wa Falāsifatuhā*, 3rd. ed. (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, n.d.), p. 105. See also the discussion on this by Wan Mohd Nor Wan Daud, *The Concept of Knowledge and Its Implications for Education in a Developing Country*, (London, New York: Mansell Publishing Ltd., 1989), p. 73.

Therefore, the correct understanding of the term knowledge is a prerequisite for the performance of correct action.

The discussion will include a brief classification of knowledge which is considered important because it provides the teachers with the bases of the curriculum and portrays the essence of Islamic education. We find that most writings, especially in modern days, neglect this aspect and direct their focus to historical and organizational aspects of Islamic educational institutions in classical Islam. There are two areas of research which have become the particular interest of modern scholars: the history of Islamic institutions of learning such as the mosque and the *madrasah*, and the rise of intellectual movements during medieval times with an emphasis on the emergence of sects and schools in Islam²⁷.

i. The Nature of Knowledge in Islam

From the very beginning of the creation of man (i.e., Ādam), God made man superior over his other creations. He bestowed upon man knowledge (*‘ilm*)²⁸, without which man has no value at all. Moreover, if not for the possession of knowledge man would be considered incompetent to govern this universe and would not have the qualification for the vicegerency of God

²⁷. Omar, op. cit., p. 3.

²⁸. The first revelation given to Muḥammad is an order to struggle in the pursuit of knowledge. See *Sūrat al-‘Alaq* (96):1-5.

(*Khilāfah Allāh*) on earth²⁹. It is due to this, that God honoured Ādam by commanding the entire creation to bow before him, and he was thus envied by Iblīs³⁰ who in turn believed that he was superior to the former due to his element of creation. He was made up from fire (*nār*) as opposed to Ādam, who was created from clay³¹.

Therefore, it is no wonder that we find that knowledge is made the basis and core of the achievement of *falāḥ*, *najāḥ* and *saʿādah* in this world and in the hereafter. This reveals why the first *wahy* was about knowledge and why Islamic tradition focuses on and gives great emphasis to knowledge. Therefore, from the Islamic point of view everything must be started with the acquisition of knowledge. The Prophet Muḥammad has made the acquisition of knowledge compulsory for each and every individual in his *ummah*. He is reported to have said, *ṭalab al-ʿilm farīḍah ʿalā kull Muslim*³², which means, the acquisition of knowledge is compulsory upon each and every Muslim.

²⁹. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):30.

³⁰. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):34.

³¹. *Sūrat Ṣād* (38):76

³². Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr al-Namarī al-Qurṭubī, *Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍlih*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, n.d.) 1:7. In some other narrations, woman is mentioned together with man, *ʿalā kull Muslim wa Muslimah* which means on every Muslim, man and woman. See al-Ghazālī, *Fatḥat al-ʿUlūm*, Cairo, 1932, p. 36, cited in A.L. Tibawi, *Muslim Education in the Golden Age of the Caliphate*, IC, 1954, p. 420; Burhān al-Islam al-Zarnūjī, *Taʿlīm al-Mutaʿallim Ṭarīq al-Taʿallum*, (ed.) Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir Aḥmad, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1986), p. 83; ʿAlī Ibn ʿUthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, *The Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, tr. by Reynold A. Nicholson, E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Vol. 17 (London: Luzac and Comp, 1967), p. 11, cited by James E Royster, "Muhammad as Teacher and Exemplar, MW, 1978, p. 240.

The usage of the word *farīdah* connotes the idea of command and whoever fails to comply with it is subject to punishment. Owing to the defects, shortcomings and weaknesses in human beings, the compulsion is categorised into two categories, *farq ‘ayn* (individual obligation) and *farq kifāyah* (collective obligation) whereby any knowledge which is considered to be basic and essential for the human being without which his *īmān* is at stake is considered *‘ayn*, whereas, if any individual of the community performs the act, thereby releasing others from compulsion, he is said to have fulfilled the collective obligation³³. Thus the attainment of knowledge by man is not only possible, but necessary, and is considered obligatory for all responsible Muslims. This position is contrary to that of the Greek skeptics and sophists, some of whom considered knowledge to be vain imagination³⁴.

As I have mentioned elsewhere the revelation (*wahy*) given to Muḥammad indicates the status of knowledge in Islam³⁵. Muḥammad was asked to struggle to establish and institutionalize knowledge. *Iqra’* leads to the idea of looking into something (*uṭlub*) and disseminating the idea (*ud‘u*). This is another type of struggle (*jihād*) from the Islamic point of view³⁶. In fact it

³³. al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992), 1:23-25 (hereafter cited as *Ihyā’*).

³⁴. Wan Daud, op. cit., p. 62.

³⁵. Please refer to Chapter One, 1.2.

³⁶. Abdul Halim Mahmud, *Isrā’ dan Miṣrāj: Satu Analisa Baru*, (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, 1985), p.10.

epitomizes all human knowledge³⁷.

Thus, there is no equivalent word in English which can render the concept of *‘ilm* according to the Qur’ān.

The Qur’ānic word *‘ilm* is usually rendered into English as "knowledge". Nevertheless, it fails to convey the real connotation attached to *‘ilm* in the real and theoretical world of Islam³⁸. In this regard Rosenthal says:

"..."Knowledge" falls short of expressing all the factual and emotional contents of *‘ilm*. For *‘ilm* is one of those concepts that have dominated Islam and given Muslim civilization its distinctive shape and complexion. In fact, there is no other concept that has been operative as a determinant of Muslim civilization in all its aspects to the same extent as *‘ilm*... There is no branch of Muslim intellectual life, of Muslim religious and political life, and of the daily life of the average Muslim that remained untouched by the all-pervasive attitude towards "knowledge" as something of supreme value for the Muslim being³⁹.

Knowledge according to S. M. N al-Attas, cannot be defined specifically

³⁷. Munawar Ahmad Anees and Alia Nasreen Athar, "Educational Thought in Islam", *HI*, Vol. 3, 2/1980, p. 48.

³⁸. *ibid.*

³⁹. F. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*, (Leiden:E.J. Brill, 1970), pp.1-2. See also Anees and Athar, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

to its precise, distinctive characteristic , but only by describing its nature⁴⁰. What is of relevance here is the epistemological definition⁴¹. Since the Qur'an is neither a philosophical, nor an academic treatise on epistemology, it does not present a concise definition of knowledge. However, the salient features of a doctrine of knowledge can be discerned quite clearly from its pages⁴².

The term *‘ilm* (knowledge) has been defined by many scholars since medieval times. Rosenthal has made a great deal of effort in collecting these definitions⁴³. However, it seems to us that these *‘Ulamā’* had been influenced by their different and various fields of scholarly activities. Some of them defined it from a philosophical point of view. Some defined it in a theological sense, while some other scholars prescribe it from mystical perspectives⁴⁴. It is al-Zarnūjī who has come up with a more comprehensive definition of ‘knowledge’ from an educationist’s point of view for he was an educationist by profession. According to him knowledge or *‘ilm* can be defined as:

*ṣifāh yatajallā bihā liman qāmat hiya bihī al-madhkūr(u) kamā huwa*⁴⁵.

⁴⁰. S. M. Naquib al-Attas, *The Concept of Education in Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1991), pp. 16-17 (hereafter cited as *Concept*).

⁴¹. *ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴². Wan Daud, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

⁴³. Rosenthal, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-69.

⁴⁴. *ibid.*, p. 46-48.

⁴⁵. al-Zarnūjī, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

It carries the idea that knowledge may only be prescribed through the characteristics and behaviour of its possessor. Any action taken by a man is actually based on his capacity and level of his knowledge⁴⁶.

The root *‘l-m*, of which the word *‘ilm* is one of the derivatives, occurs in the Qur’ān with an unusual frequency. In all there are about 780 such occurrences⁴⁷, that make up about one percent of the Qur’ānic vocabulary. It is no wonder that the Qur’ān abounds with universal statements connoting the attributes of the human mind such as reasoning, thinking, remembering, judging etc., with numerous exhortations for seeking truth and knowledge in the unfolding of cosmic mysteries and purporting their significance for man⁴⁸.

The Qur’ān uses this type of frequency and repetitions in order to inculcate certain key concepts in the minds of the listeners⁴⁹. Therefore

⁴⁶. There are many instances which can be cited where people act according to their level of knowledge. From the Qur’an, we find that Hābīl was killed by his brother because of his jealousy and he even did not know how to bury his brother’s corpse, until Allah sent two ravens fighting each other which resulted in the killing of one of them. The killer then buried the dead. The same action was taken by Qābīl, the killer. The lesson is that any action taken out of ignorance may cause hardship and regrets in life. Allāh says *‘fa aṣḥaḥ min al-nādimīn min aḥl dhālik’*, which means, then, he became full of regrets on that account. See *sūrat al-Mā’idah* (5):31.

⁴⁷. This number of occurrences is based on Muḥammad Fuād ‘Abd al-Bāqī’s, *al-Mu‘jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, (n.p: Dār al-Fikr, 1986). According to Rosenthal’s estimation, the derivations of the root *‘l-m* occur 750 times, thus ranking it third in numerical tabulation and importance. The words Allah (God) and *Rabb* (Sustainer) are repeated 2,800 and 950 times respectively. According to Anees from his account the derivatives occur 800 times. See Wan Daud, op. cit., p. 32. See also Anees and Athar, op. cit., p. 49.

⁴⁸. Anees and Athar, *ibid.*, pp.48-49.

⁴⁹. Omar, op. cit., p. 22.

Rosenthal concludes that it is evident that the terms which were truly important to the Prophet do indeed occur in the Qur'ān with greater frequency than all others. On the other hand, terms that expressed ideas which he did not consider vital elements of his preaching tend to appear low down on the scale in the tabulation of words⁵⁰. One may say that the repetition is not important. But in the case of the Qur'ān the recurrence of the same facts in several *sūrahs* is not mere repetition. Here repetition is accompanied by some variations. This fact has a significant relevance for education. Repetition which is accompanied by new illustrations or comments is more productive than mere repetition which is likely to be boring⁵¹.

ii. Divisions of Knowledge

Knowledge is divisible into: (a) knowledge relating to the Creator (*Khāliq*) and (b) knowledge relating to creations (*makh'lūq*). God's knowledge is considered 'the mother of Divine attributes'. This notion is so pervasive in the Qur'an that it is present practically everywhere, whether in its direct contact with the root of knowledge (*‘ilm*) or indirectly through other terms such as His hearing, His vision, or His awareness of everything⁵². The second is its insistence on the truth (*ḥaqq*) and certainty (*yaqīn*) whose antitheses are

⁵⁰. Rosenthal, op. cit., p. 21. See also Omar, op. cit., p. 22.

⁵¹. ‘Abdul-Raḥman Ṣāliḥ ‘Abdullāh, *Educational Theory: A Qur'ānic Outlook*, (Mecca: Umm al-Qurā University, 1982), p.180.

⁵². See for example the description of God such as *‘allām*, *‘alīm*, *khabīr*, *samī‘*, *baṣīr* and so on, in Qur'an 31:34, and 49:13

falsehood (*bāṭil*), doubt (*shakk*) and conjecture (*ẓann*). The concept came to the fore when the Meccans refused to accept the doctrinal positions brought by the Messenger of God, that is, the contrast between the knowledge given by God and knowledge of man⁵³. The third is that it is holistic or integral in nature. This distinctiveness is evident in its world-view which is uncompromisingly tawḥīdic or monotheistic. It means that the epistemological concerns are related to ethics and spirituality. The scope covers both the religious sphere and the secular because Islam does not admit any compartmentalization between these two concerns in actual life⁵⁴. The fourth is that knowledge must be followed by good deeds. This is because true fear of God (*khashyah*) is defined in terms of good actions and also it falls within the scope of the term *‘ālim* itself. For according to al-Ghazālī knowledge is *khashyah*⁵⁵, as such an *‘ālim* is one who fears God, the Lofty⁵⁶. The *‘ālim* is not only the one who possesses knowledge but also the one who acts according to his knowledge. The last salient feature of knowledge is its unlimited nature. It is not restricted to human knowledge, but includes divine knowledge as well. Thus knowledge is ever growing and infinite. The Qur’ān expresses it through the experiences

⁵³. Wan Daud, op. cit., p. 64. See also *sūrat Yūnus* (10):36 and *sūrat al-Najm* (53):28.

⁵⁴. The Qur’ān has mentioned that the previous prophets of God were taught other forms of knowledge apart from a divine revelation, for example the experience of Yūsuf in *sūrat Yūsuf* (12):6, 101, Dāwūd in *sūrat Ṭāhā* (20):80, Sulaymān in *sūrat al-Naml* (27):16, 20.

⁵⁵. al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā’*, 1:112.

⁵⁶. *ibid.*

of the prophets of God including Muḥammad⁵⁷.

In Islam, knowledge about God is the highest form. Therefore, we find that almost all knowledge revealed to Muḥammad during the Meccan period is related to the concept of *īmān* (faith) and subsequently *ʿamal*. Astonishingly, according to Ḥamidullah almost all the verses of the Qurʾān, in praise of or in connection with learning and writing, belong to the Meccan period, while the Medinan verses lay greater emphasis on action and performance⁵⁸. Here we notice that there is a link between *ʿilm*, *īmān* and *ʿamal*. *ʿIlm* must come first⁵⁹, then followed by a firm belief in it. As a result action will follow later. Knowledge (*ʿilm*) should produce true belief (*īmān*), while *īmān* in turn should produce good deeds (*ʿamal ṣāliḥ*) and therefore, knowledge should produce good deeds (*ʿamal ṣāliḥ*). Man ought to know the particulars about God including His self-disclosure of His essence through His divine names, attributes⁶⁰ and the cosmos. The Qurʾān, therefore, emphasizes that man

⁵⁷. See Qurʾān 12:76, 18:60-82 and 20:11.

⁵⁸. M. Ḥamidullah, "Educational System in The Time of The Prophet", in *Islamic Culture*, 13/1939, p. 51. He gives examples from *sūrat al-Zumar* (39):9 about the inequality of an *ʿālim* and a non-*ʿālim*, *sūrat al-Isrāʾ* (17):85 about the inability of man to acquire all knowledge and *sūrat Fāṭir* (35):28 about the fear (*khashyah*) of the *ʿālim* towards his God and many others.

⁵⁹. Three words from the first revelation given to Muḥammad confirm the highest status of knowledge from Qurʾānic point of view. They are *iqraʾ*, *ʿallam* and *al-qalam*. God associates Himself with *al-karam* (kindness and generosity) and considers these as His greatest bounties and signs given to his human beings to the extent that he used to swear by *al-qalam* in *sūrat al-Qalam* (68):1. See Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Baṣrī al-Māwardī, *Adab al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn*, (Beirut: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1987), p. 60.

⁶⁰. The Qurʾān mentions this as *al-Asmāʾ al-Husnā*, the beautiful names (of God). In *sūrat al-Aʿrāf* (7):180 we read "The most beautiful names belong to God, so call on Him by them".

ought to know that God is the One and Only, God, the eternal and Absolute, He begetteth not, nor is He begotten, and there is none like unto Him⁶¹. God is most powerful⁶², God knows everything⁶³, He sees everything⁶⁴, He hears and knows⁶⁵.

Therefore, knowledge about God (*maʿrifah*), not about His essence, is essential for man so that he can worship Him⁶⁶. The knowing part that links man to this knowledge is the soul (*rūḥ*) which acts as the seat of knowledge. Knowledge of soul itself is limited to man⁶⁷. Though it is little, this knowledge enables man to know his self which in turn serves as a medium to knowing about God⁶⁸. The Prophet is reported to have said, *man ʿaraf nafsah ʿaraf rabbah* which means he who knows himself, knows his God⁶⁹. It brings the idea that whenever a man contemplates and ponders over himself with all his creative weaknesses, such as *al-fanāʾ*, *al-faqr* and *al-quʿf*, he will attain the knowledge that God, as the creator, possesses all those opposite attributes such

⁶¹. *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* (112):1-4.

⁶². The term used by the Qurʾān is *al-ʿAzīz*, *al-Jabbār*. See *Sūrat al-Ḥashr*(59):23.

⁶³. *Sūrat al-Māʾidah* (5):97-98.

⁶⁴. *Sūrat al-ʿAlaq* (96):14.

⁶⁵. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):244.

⁶⁶. *Sūrat Ṭāhā* (20):14.

⁶⁷. *Sūrat al-Isrāʾ* (17):85.

⁶⁸. Omar, op. cit., pp. 23-24.

⁶⁹. See al-Zarnūjī, op. cit., p.144.

as *al-qudrah*, *al-baqā'*, *al-quwwah* and *al-ghinā*. When he realizes his own weaknesses, he will realize that God is strong. Therefore, he begins to rely on God and will not depend merely on himself and his intellectual capacity. This is the basis of *al-tawakkul* in Islam⁷⁰.

Not every Muslim can arrive at this knowledge nor can all Muslims attain the same level of that knowledge. The Qur'ān characterizes their different levels of achievements. It shows their differences through such terms as *mu'minūn*, *muttaqūn*, *mukhlisūn*, and as *awliyā' Allāh*. What determines man's attainment of one of these particular stages is his *īmān* and *ʿamal*. *īmān* will provide man with the knowledge that there exists a reality in the unknown, so that belief does not depend on vision alone⁷¹. This type of knowledge has different levels in the ascending scale of certitude as expressed clearly by M.M. Sharif:

- i. knowledge by inference (*ʿilm al-yaqīn*),
- ii. knowledge by perception and reported perception or observation (*ʿayn al-yaqīn*), and
- iii. knowledge by personal experience or intuition (*ḥaqq al-yaqīn*).

A distinction can be exemplified by the following certitudes:

- i. fire always burns,

⁷⁰. *ibid.* pp.144-145.

⁷¹. Omar, *op. cit.*, p.24.

ii. it has burnt John's fingers, and

iii. it has burnt my fingers.

The first type of knowledge depends either on the truth of its presupposition as in deduction, or its mere probability as in induction. There is a greater certitude about our knowledge based on actual experience (observation or experiment) of phenomena. The second type of knowledge is either scientific knowledge based on experience (observation and experiment) or historical knowledge based on reports and descriptions of actual experiences. Not all reports are trustworthy. Therefore, special attention should be paid to the character of the reporter. If he is a man of shady character, his report should be carefully checked⁷².

iii. Knowledge and *ʿamal*

Islam stresses that *ʿamal* (action) should be the result of *ʿilm* (good knowledge) and *īmān* (firm belief). *īmān* will not be regarded as complete if *ʿamal* is neglected. *īmān* must be based on proper knowledge. Hence these three items must come together at the same time. The Qurʾān always

⁷². M. M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, (Pakistan Philosophical Congress, 1963), 1:146-147. Cf. Wan Daud, op. cit., p. 65, where he refers the usage of cognitive certainty (*ʿilm al-yaqīn*), certainty of sight (*ʿayn al-yaqīn*) and absolute experienced certainty (*ḥaqq al-yaqīn*) to the grade of certainty. Certainty comes from knowledge (*ʿilm*). Thus the absolute certainty is actually the ultimate, indubitable truth that comes from God. Therefore, Mawdūdī holds the idea that the actual knowledge is the ultimate realities (*al-ḥaqāʾiq al-nihāʾiyyah*) that come from God. To obtain this we need the Prophet to inform us about that. See Abū al-Aʿlā al-Mawdūdī, *Ilā Ayyi ṣhayʾ Yadʿū al-Islām*, (Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1983), p. 12.

intertwines *īmān* and *ʿamal*⁷³ and both are incomplete without knowledge⁷⁴. Muʿādh is reported to have said that *al-ʿilm wa al-īmān bashāshān*⁷⁵ which means knowledge and belief are a cheerful, happy mien. At another time he is reported to have said that *al-ʿilm wa al-īmān makānahumā. Man ibtaghāhumā wajadahumā*⁷⁶ which means that knowledge and belief are at the same place. Anyone who looks for them will certainly find them. All actions must be the product of knowledge because in Islam God is the source of guidance for all actions. In *sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):2 the Qurʾān clearly states that it is a guidance, without doubt, for those who fear God. It is followed by the interpretation of those who fear God in verse 3 and 4 that they are those who believe in the unseen, are steadfast in prayer, spend what God has provided for them and who believe in the revelation sent to Muḥammad and those before him and have the assurance of the hereafter, and that the revelation which is the first source of knowledge (*ʿilm*) is a guidance for those who fear God (*muttaqūn*) and who in turn believe (*yuʿminūn*) in what had been revealed to them.

With knowledge and faith they perform all obligations laid upon them by God through His Prophet and in turn this obligatory worship will increase

⁷³. We can see the words *al-ladhīn āmanū wa ʿamilū al-ṣāliḥāt* repeated in the Qurʾān many times which shows that in the absence of one of them, the other would not be functional. For instance, *sūrat al-Inshiqāq* (84):25, *al-Burūj* (85):11, *al-Tīn* (95):6, *al-Bayyinah* (98):7 and *al-ʿAṣr* (103):3.

⁷⁴. See *sūrat al-Qaṣas*:80, *al-ʿAnkabūt*:43, 49, *Āl ʿImrān*:18, and *al-Raḥmān*:3-4.

⁷⁵. al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak ʿĀlā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1990), 1:178.

⁷⁶. *ibid.*

their strength in faith and obedience. The aim of this worship (*‘ibādah*) is to attain proximity to God (*taqarrub ilā Allāh*) and to establish His presence in one's heart. This is the highest stage in *‘ibādah* which is described by the Prophet as *ihsān*⁷⁷.

Knowledge of the unity of God is manifested in the doctrine of *tawḥīd* which is expressed in the *shahādah*. This doctrine constitutes the first principle of everything that is Islamic. Through this doctrine, Islam affirms that God is the source of all goodness and beauty, the alpha and omega of the Islamic message⁷⁸.

With this we can say that any knowledge which does not have a *tawḥīdic* base will lead its possessor away from God⁷⁹. In contrast, knowledge

⁷⁷. In one of his hadiths the Prophet says; *ihsān* is "*an ta‘bud Allāh ka annak tarāh. Fa in lam takun tarāh fa innahū yarāk*" which means, to worship God as if you see Him. If you cannot see him (achieve this stage) then (you must remember that) He verily sees you. According to Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, one who achieves this stage succeeds in cultivating the witnessing of God (*mushāhadah*) and the presence of God (*ḥuḍūr*) in his heart. Nawawī adds that this would indicate the attributes of sincerity (*ikhhlās*) and observation (*murāqabat*) in his action. See Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī bi Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, (Cairo: Dār al-Rayyān li al-Turāth, 1986), 1:140, 146. al-Nawawī, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim bi Sharḥ al-Nawawī*, (Cairo: al-Maḥabba al-Miṣriyyah wa Maktabatuhā, n.d.), 1:157-158.

⁷⁸. Muḥammad ‘Abdul Ḥaq, "The meaning and Significance of the *Shahādah*", *IS*, 23/1984, pp. 171-187.

⁷⁹. *Tawḥīd* is the foundation of *īmān* and *islām*. It is a belief in the unity and the truth of God and His right to be worshipped. One who does not believe in the ultimate knowledge of God has not believed in Him. Failure to attest His supremacy in knowledge is tantamount to disregarding the unity of His knowledge and affirmation (*ithbāt*) and His right to be worshipped (*tawḥīd al-ilāhiyyah wa al-‘ibādah*). God has cautioned this to people in *sūrat Yūsuf* (12):76 that whatever knowledge they obtain or to whatever standard of knowledge they achieve, certainly it does not surpass His knowledge. See Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur‘ān*, (Beirut, Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1982), 4:2020. For further discussion on *tawḥīd* see ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ḥasan Āl al-Shaykh, *Fath al-Majīd Sharḥ Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, (Madīnah: Dār al-Ṭibā‘ah wa al-Nashr al-Islāmī, n.d.), pp. 11-12.

within this idea not only brings the possessor to the way of God, but also guides him to grasp the interconnectedness of all things throughout the creation whose centre is the divine⁸⁰. With this basis, knowledge must bring the truth (*ḥaqq*) and certainty (*yaqīn*). This is evident in the lives of the prophets sent to human beings. They were able to consolidate worldly affairs within their religious and spiritual duties as the prophets of God. For instance, Mūsā who experienced the tyranny of Firʿawn⁸¹, Yūsuf who experienced enslavement⁸² and Sulaymān became the ruler of a state⁸³. This is true also in the case of the Prophet Muḥammad. He experienced hardship and worldly affairs as well as spiritual life even before his prophethood. He was above all a devout and virtuous man. He was concerned with all worldly matters as well as spiritual matters. He was portrayed in the tradition as a man of two profiles combined in one spirit, for instance his action in the case of the Badr prisoners and in the formation of the treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah where his wisdom and talent was apparent which is an evidence of his knowledge and wisdom.

10. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that any research done on Islamic education

⁸⁰. Chittick, *Sufi Path*, p. 150 cited in Omar, op. cit., p. 26.

⁸¹. *Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ* (28):7-14.

⁸². *Sūrat Yūsuf* (12):19-20.

⁸³. *Sūrat al-Anbiyāʾ* (21):78-80 and *Sūrat Sabaʾ* (34):10-11.

should be geared towards achieving the noble aim of education in Islam, that is to develop a whole person in such a way that all knowledge acquired will contribute towards shaping and moulding him to be a good and righteous person who submits to God alone in totality. Thus, education is not only the process of imparting knowledge but also to develop concurrently aspects of physical, spiritual, moral and intellectual faculties inherent in man. In this respect, it can be said that both divinely revealed and acquired knowledge need to be well blended, such that they are integrated. This integrated approach to knowledge should not be construed to mean that there is segregation between the various branches of knowledge. Islam regards revelational knowledge as the highest form since it comes direct from God. This means that education from the Islamic point of view not only stresses the so-called 'religious subjects' such as *fiqh*, *tafsīr* or hadith but also equally lays emphasis on transforming their teachings into practical life. Thus, it can be said that Islamic education is a religio-vocational teaching. The divine revealed knowledge must be learned by all while the acquired can be developed by any researcher. In the following chapter the various stages through which divine knowledge was imparted to man will be examined.

CHAPTER ONE

Methodology of Teaching: The Origins

1.1. Introduction

Contrary to the literal meaning of the word 'teaching' a teacher is not supposed only to teach and transmit knowledge but also to fill many other roles such as adviser, examiner, moralist, disciplinarian, administrator and many more. However, teaching is his chief function. What he teaches will vary from generation to generation, age-group to age-group and culture to culture. It might be a moral code, the elements of trade, a religious system. It might be reading, writing, and arithmetic. It might be a technique of memorization and so forth.

Whatever he teaches the intention is the same, that his pupils will learn it: the primary purpose of all teaching is the promotion of learning¹.

However, teaching will not achieve its target unless it follows certain rules and systems that make it an effective teaching. Otherwise, the class will be bored and it will be dull to the students. Some educators claim that good teaching cannot be defined because criteria differ for every instructional

¹. James M. Thyne, *The Psychology of Learning and Techniques of Teaching*, (London: University of London Press, 1968), p. 10.

situation and every teacher. They conceive good teaching as being so complex and creative that it defies analysis. There can be no doubt that teaching is a complex task, yet educators find it relatively easy to list the characteristics of a good teacher. Although they may differ about the relative importance of these characteristics, rarely do they disagree on the characteristics to be included in such a list².

According to Ryon and his colleagues, there are three factors associated with effective teaching. They are defined by the adjectives warm and understanding, organized and businesslike and stimulating and imaginative. The nearer a teacher is to each factor the more effective he is³. Therefore, contrary to popular belief, it is not true that a teacher has to be an extrovert to be a good teacher. Some good teachers are very low-key in the classroom, while other teachers, both lively and amusing, survive only as entertainers. Although some teachers develop a special classroom manner, in the main the style of teaching will depend on the sort of person the teachers are.⁴

Hence, methods and techniques associated with each method play a very important role in making teaching effective. The question of which

². Elizabeth Perrott, *Effective Teaching*, (London and New York: Longman, 1992), p. 1.

³. *ibid.*

⁴. Roger Gower and Steve Walters, *Teaching Practice Handbook*, (Oxford: Heinemann International, 1983), p. 7.

teaching method will be the most effective in reaching the goal of education depends on decisions made by the individual teacher.⁵

Though the methodology of teaching is considered the cream of the teaching process, it is obvious that the process would not be achieving the intended aim unless a teacher had a clear picture of inter-related factors that would help him achieve the target. Therefore, before we pursue the main idea, the methodology of teaching, it is wise to have a brief idea of these inter-related areas. It will lead us to the understanding of the methodology from an Islamic point of view.

In speaking about the teaching and learning process one cannot afford to ignore the most basic element of the process, the knowledge (*‘ilm*); rather we must look into the matter. Thus the nature of knowledge in Islam has been explained in the previous chapter⁶ as this has a very great impact on the process of acquiring knowledge and would shape the patterns of thinking of teachers and students and guide them to an intended direction.

1.2. Terms in Islamic Education

The terms denoting self-reformation (*iṣlāḥ*) in Islamic civilization in

⁵. Diane Larsen-Freeman, *Techniques And Principles In Language Teaching*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 1.

⁶. See Introductory Chapter, part 11.

relation to the Islamic educational activities are, *tarbiyah*, *ta'lim*, *ta'dīb*, *irshād* and *tadrīs*⁷. All these terms are considered sufficient to convey the nature and objective of education in Islam. Nonetheless, a detailed study of the former three terms may enlighten the reader with a cross section of various views they denote and may also distinguish the meanings of each term because all these terms are the product of Islamic civilization which in turn are derived from the Divine revelation.

1.2.1. *Tarbiyah*

Nowadays the usage of the term *tarbiyah* is widely used to denote the process of education in general. It originates from the word *rabbā* which means to feed, to grow and to nourish, or in other words to carry out the gradual process of upbringing and growing things to the stage of completeness or maturity⁸. The term is applicable to the growth of everything including human beings, plants and animals⁹. However, the actual meaning of the term *tarbiyah* denotes a process which raises someone from a lower stage to a higher stage in developing himself as a person till he achieves the nearest point towards the perfect man, the essence of which is embedded in his *fiṭrah*. This in fact is the *ḥaqīqah insāniyah* (human reality). This is the essence of the phrase

⁷. Muḥammad ʿUthmān al-Muḥammadi, "Institusi Pondok: Benteng yang Masih Kebal Mempertahankan ʿAqidah dan Sunnah", *Pengasuh* No. 478, April-July, 1985, p. 24 (hereafter cited as "Institusi Pondok").

⁸. Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, s.v. "Rabbā"

⁹. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, s.v. "Rabbā"

rabb al-‘ālamīn in *sūrat al-Fātiḥah* (1):2. God is the *Rabb* who is the administrator and the sustainer, the possessor and the executor (*al-mālik al-mutaṣarrif*) of the whole universe¹⁰. Therefore, we find that the Qur’ān does not refer the usage of this term except to the growth of man¹¹. Of course by nature parents would take care of their children and would sacrifice everything, even their life, in bringing them up and nurturing them from their childhood¹². It is unthinkable that the parents who pay such attention to the physical well being of their children would neglect the inculcation of moral character and the refinement of their taste which alerts their moral consciousness. Paying attention to their physical growth, without the equivalent emphasis on their moral dimension will encourage them to be neglectful in fulfilling the Qur’ānic obligations as well as their responsibilities as human beings¹³. Thus from the Islamic point of view, a teacher is a *murabbī* who assists his students to achieve a higher stage which is the nearest point to perfection as far as he can with the blessing of God. Based on this it is safe to say that education not only involves the mental capacity of a student but also the entire dimensions of a person since he is a composite of *jism*, *nafs* and *rūḥ*. Thus *tarbiyah* means a process of bringing a man from one stage to another till he reaches the stage of complete

¹⁰. Quṭb, op. cit., 1:22.

¹¹. See *sūrat al-Isrā’* (17):24, in which we read the phrase "*kamā rabbayānī ṣaghīran*" that is as they did care (cherished) for me when I was little.

¹². Quṭb, op. cit., 4:2221.

¹³. For detailed discussion see Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, *Pendidikan Islam, Falsafah, Disiplin dan Peranan Pendidik*, (Petaling Jaya: Dewan Pustaka Islam, 1991), pp. 37-47.

maturity in human development.

1.2.2. *Ta'ālīm*

Ta'ālīm is a process of imparting knowledge to a person. That is to say about truth by which the precious life of *insān* and his daily activities could be salvaged. Originally the process of imparting knowledge (*ta'ālīm*) is considered a derivation of Divine power (*al-Qudrah*) and secret (*al-sirr*) as it is understood from *sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):31 where God taught Ādam the truth (*ḥaqīqah*) of all the names¹⁴. In other words the process of Islamic education as has been understood from the terms *ta'ālīm* and *tarbiyah* is actually a process which is very essential and important as it is a shadow of a Godly action. That is, the imparting of knowledge on the essentialities of the life of man. However, *ta'ālīm* is distinct from *tarbiyah* in the sense that the former has a close semantic relation to *ilm* where it indicates the product of a laborious study and learning¹⁵. Thus, it relates to instruction which involves mental activities. In this way *ta'ālīm* is infact a process of transmitting knowledge to a person which in its turn will help to train his mind and to develop his reasoning power¹⁶. Thus the role of a teacher (*mu'allim*) is imperative since he is supposed to emulate the Godly action as much as he can. Therefore, he is

¹⁴. Quṭb, op. cit., 1:57.

¹⁵. Bernard Lewis and others, (eds.), *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new ed.), (Leiden: E. J. Brill, London: Luzac and Co., 1971), s.v. "ilm", 3:1133.

¹⁶. Omar, op. cit., p. 8.

responsible not only to transfer information but also to impart knowledge to his students¹⁷.

1.2.3. *Ta'dīb*

Ta'dīb is a derivation of a-d-b which means to discipline and train the mind and soul¹⁸. It is a process of educating someone through inculcating in him good qualities and attributes of the mind and soul in relation to God, the Prophet and other creations¹⁹. To some it is a process for performing the correct in opposition to an erroneous action, of the right or the proper against that which is wrong²⁰. The word *adab* also acquired a more strictly intellectual meaning for it is that of humanistic studies²¹. A man of *adab* (*al-adīb*) is one who takes good qualities and composes them together, while a knowledgeable man (*al-ʿālim*) is one who goes for a field of knowledge and works for it²². Thus this is the process of conveying the information of *ādāb* in Islam in its wider sense. The process of gaining ethical education is actually from God and from the Prophet. The Prophet is reported to have said *addabanī Rabbī fa aḥsana*

¹⁷. Muḥammad ʿUthmān al-Muḥammadī, "Institusi Pondok", p. 25.

¹⁸. Ibn Manẓūr, op. cit.

¹⁹. Muḥammad ʿUthmān al-Muḥammadī, "Institusi Pondok", p. 25.

²⁰. al-Attas, *Concept*, p. 25

²¹. George Makdisi, *The Rise of Humanism in Classical Islam and the Christian West*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 88.

²². Abū ʿAbd Allāh Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Muʿjam al-Udabāʾ*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1991), 1:45.

ta'dībī which means my Lord educated me, and so made my education most excellent²³. This means, education should not be segregated from *ādāb* or *akhlāq*. *Ādāb* is something which has connection with the spiritual life which is related to the nature of human characteristics²⁴. Due to the nature of Islamic education which stresses the importance of good manners and high morality, it should therefore be impossible to find someone who is educated Islamically and yet is immoral (*sayyi' al-adab*)²⁵. The emphasis on *adab*, which includes action (*ʿamal*) in education and the educational process, ensures that *ʿilm* is being put to good use in the society²⁶. A *muʿallim* is one who gears his students towards human perfection.

1.2.4. *Irshād*

Irshād is true guidance. That is to say guidance that leads someone to the true life as has been ordained in God's knowledge and perfection. Thus education in Islam is also a process to guide someone towards the correct direction of life. This is evident when we understand the function of *taṣawwuf* in Islam. The true knowledge should create the required psychological condition suitable for the cultivation of spiritual values. It is the psychological condition of the true heart that leads someone to perform *ʿamal ṣāliḥ*. An

²³. al-Attas, *Concept*, p. 26.

²⁴. Muḥammad ʿUthmān al-Muḥammadī, "Institusi Pondok", p.25.

²⁵. *ibid.*

²⁶. al-Attas, *Concept*, p. 25.

educated person therefore, must be someone who learns to live by the guidance and not to go astray in respect of his belief and practice.

1.2.5. *Tadrīs*

Tadrīs refers to a process of teaching subjects to the students. Imparting knowledge is the main concern of this term. Thus the process can be subsequently followed by evaluation process in the form of written or oral examinations.

All these terms are interrelated. Their meanings must be combined together to get a true picture and a comprehensive concept of education in Islam. Based on the above discussion, it is safe to say that Islamic education can be defined as the process of imparting knowledge, the training of mind and body and the moulding of the character of a person, so that it brings the person to the nearest point of the perfect human being. Thus the teacher is not only supposed to impart knowledge but at the same time acts as *murabbī*, *mu'allim*, *mu'addib*, *murshid* and *mudarris*.

1.3. Methodology of Gabriel

Basically the various sources of knowledge in Islam can be classified into two; revelation and reason. Revelation is the first source of knowledge in Islam because it comes from God²⁷. Everything that exists in this world comes

²⁷. *Sūrat al-Ḥashr* (59):22.

from God including knowledge. God who is considered as *Rabb* comprehends all things. The concept of His Lordship includes the proper upbringing of His creatures by instituting within them certain mechanisms intrinsic to their natures or instincts as well as by direct revelation as in the case of man²⁸. God's knowledge bypasses human intelligence and therefore it is absolute. Nobody can challenge his knowledge including angels²⁹. The Qur'ān is the most sacred book revealed to human beings and it therefore acts as the main source of knowledge. It also indicates that there exist other sources of knowledge but they are ultimately derived from the same source; God the origin of all things. Therefore, knowledge from the Islamic point of view is contained in the Qur'ān. However it is not in detail but rather in principle. Any non-revelational knowledge is subject to verification and it does not carry the same status as the revelational knowledge³⁰. The tradition of the Prophet (*sunnah*) interprets the generalities of the Qur'ān and thus it is considered the second source of knowledge in Islam. However, the fact that the Prophet's utterance is another kind of revelation enables the *sunnah* to be classified under revelational knowledge. The Qur'ān witnesses that the Prophet does not speak out of his own desire but it is an inspiration sent down to him³¹. Other

²⁸. Wan Daud, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

²⁹. *Sūrah al-Baqarah* (2):33-34.

³⁰. Wan Daud, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

³¹. *Sūrat al-Najm* (53):3

sources of knowledge are natural phenomena, human psychology and history³². Fazlur Rahman believes that it is the Qur'ān that brings knowledge to the human being. Three sources of knowledge are clearly mentioned by the Qur'ān, namely the physical universe, the human mind (*anfus*) and historical study of society. To him all human knowledge is based on and arises from the data collected from these three sources. There is no other independent source of knowledge. The higher flights of the human mind, the analytic and synthetic operations of the human intellect and spirit in the realms of creative thought-both religious and mundane- must in the first place be based upon and related to the data gained from these three sources by an empirical and experimental method³³. To him, it must be clearly understood that no genuine knowledge is possible, either religious or non-religious, without being based on observation and induction³⁴. Only after induction comes deduction³⁵. Being the basis of knowledge it holds the highest place in Islam. To Muslims it is not only the text to be read in rituals and ceremonies such as prayer and supplication, the instrument of prophecy, the food for the spirit, the favourite canticle of the soul, it is at the same time the fundamental law, the treasure of the sciences, the mirror of the ages. It is the consolation for the present and the

³². Sharif, *op. cit.*, 1:14.

³³. Fazlur Rahman, "The Qur'ānic Solution of Pakistan's Educational Problems", *Islamic Studies*, 6/1967, pp. 317-318 (hereafter cited as "Qur'ānic Solution").

³⁴. The Qur'ān denounces those people who do not employ their senses and do not observe the universe. See *surat al-A'raf* (7):179.

³⁵. Fazlur Rahman, "Qur'ānic Solution", p. 318.

hope for the future³⁶. The Qur'ān is the criterion of truth³⁷, the best model for behaviour³⁸ and the final judgement in this world.

Muslims from all walks of life have been encouraged to study the Qur'ān. The first revelation which contains an injunction to read or recite represents this idea. The word *iqra'* does not only bring the idea of reading or recitation but it also contains the idea of *uṭlub* and *ud'u* which lead us to the struggle or *jihād*³⁹.

Gabriel was the agent of revelation to Muḥammad⁴⁰. This is the belief of Muslims. Both Bukhārī and Muslim narrate a hadith in their *Ṣaḥīḥs* on the authority of 'Ā'ishah that the first revelation was bestowed upon the Prophet Muḥammad while he was seeking religious purification and scorning sin (*taḥannuth*) in the cave of Ḥirā'⁴¹. Both versions have mentioned clearly that

³⁶. Muhammad Abdullah Daraz, "The Origin of Islam", in K.W. Morgan (ed.), *Islam, the Straight Path*, (New York: The Ronald Press Company, n.d.), p. 36.

³⁷. *Sūrat al-Furqān*(25):1 and *al-Baqarah* (2):185.

³⁸. *Surat al-Qalam* (68):4.

³⁹. Abdul Halim Mahmud, op cit., pp. 8 and 10.

⁴⁰. *Sūrat al-Baqarah*(2):97 clearly mentions that some people in the time of Muḥammad took Gabriel as an enemy for he brought down the revelation to Muḥammad's heart by God's will. It means that it was promulgated that Gabriel was the agent of the revelation from God to Muḥammad, and yet some people still did not believe in it and constantly ridiculed this belief. This idea is strengthened by at least four other places in the Qur'ān namely; *sūrat al-Naḥl* (16):102, *al-Shu'arā'* (26):192-196, *al-Takwīr* (81):19-21, and finally *al-Najm* (53):4-10. See Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'ān*, (Maryland: Amana Corp., 1983). See also Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *al-Sunnah al-Nabawiyyah Bayn Ahl al-Fiqh wa Ahl al-Ḥadīth*, (Beirut: Dār al-Shurūq, 1989), pp. 20-22.

⁴¹. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, op. cit., 1:30.

God's messenger to Muḥammad was Nāmūs. Linguistically speaking, the word refers to the keeper of a good or praiseworthy secret. It is the opposite of the word *jāsūs* which refers to the owner of the evil or blameworthy secret⁴². According to the hadith, when Waraqah ibn Nawfal, the cousin of Khadījah the wife of the Prophet, was informed that Muḥammad was attended by an alien with a meaningful message, he explicitly explained that it was the Nāmūs that had come with the same message to the Prophet Mūsā. This Nāmūs is none other than Gabriel⁴³. Gabriel was the one who revealed the Old Testament to Mūsā (Moses), the New Testament to ʿIsā (Jesus), the Zabūr to Dāwūd (David) and the Qurʾān to Muḥammad. Revealing messages from God was Gabriel's main task, directly or indirectly, to all the prophets sent to the people in this world⁴⁴. Muḥammad was given the first revelation when he was in the cave of Ḥirāʾ. He was praying and supplicating his God and offering advocacy and admonition (*munājāt*) to his Lord when suddenly

⁴². Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *ibid.*, 1:35; al-Nawawī, *op. cit.*, 2:203.

⁴³. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *op. cit.*, 1:35; al-Nawawī, *op. cit.*, 2:203. According to Ibn Ḥajar the People of the Book (*ahl al-Kitāb*) had agreed that Gabriel was the one who had revealed *waḥy* to Mūsā. It is in contrast with the bearer of the messages to ʿIsā where some of the Jewish people did not recognise him as a prophet. Therefore, Waraqah said, he was the Nāmūs who was sent to Mūsā, despite the fact that Waraqah himself was a Christian.

⁴⁴. In *sūrat al-Nisāʾ*(4):163 we read "We have sent thee inspiration, as We sent it to Noah and the messengers after him. We sent inspiration to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and the tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David gave the Psalms (*Zabūr*). In *sūrat al-Māʾidah*(5):46 we read "And in their footsteps We sent Jesus the son of Mary, confirming the Law (*Tawrāt*) that had come before him. We sent him the Gospel (*Injīl*), therein was guidance and light, and confirmation of the Law (*Tawrāt*) that had come before him, a guidance and admonition to those who fear God. In *sūrat al-Shūrā*(42):51 we read "It is not fitting for a man that God should speak to him except by inspiration, or from behind a veil, or by the sending of a messenger to reveal, with God's permission, what God wills, for he is Most High, Most Wise.



Gabriel was beside him asking him to read. Naturally, being illiterate⁴⁵, he responded to this request with a negative attitude, not merely because he was surprised by the appearance of the stranger, Gabriel, but also owing to his ignorance and incapability of reciting⁴⁶.

Furthermore he actually did not know what had to be recited. After insisting three times, Gabriel read five verses of *sūrat al-ʿAlaq* (96):1-5,

In the name of your Lord who creates, creates man from a clot of blood. Read in the name of your Lord who is the most bountiful, who teaches (man) with the pen, who teaches man

⁴⁵. The illiteracy of Muḥammad has become a subject of dispute amongst the scholars. I. Goldziher and R. Bell do not believe in his illiteracy; being completely unlettered. Goldziher argues that Muḥammad is said to have deleted the wording of 'Rasūl Allāh' with his hand in an agreement between him and the Meccans in the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah. Based on this incident and other pieces of evidence especially on the account that he used to conduct business for Khadijah in his youth, about the use of the pen in Qur'ān 18:109 and 31:27 and verse 29:48 "*wa mā kunt tatlu min qablihi min kitāb...*" Bell claims that all these show that Muḥammad was not completely unlettered, but at most his being ignorant of the Jewish and Christian scriptures. Being the *ummī* Prophet (*al-Nabī al-ummī*) in Qur'ān 7:157 and 158 means he was the Gentile or native Prophet sent to the Arabs and did not know the previous scriptures. Thus, his correction of 'Ali's writing of 'Rasūl Allāh' is not unusual. Muslim scholars hold the idea that he was illiterate (unlettered) in the beginning but they dispute over the issue at the end of his life. However, al-Jāḥiẓ is not in disagreement with those who hold the idea that Muḥammad was actually literate from the very beginning of his prophecy. See al-Nawawī, op. cit., 12:135; W. M. Watt and Richard Bell, *Introduction to the Qur'ān*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1970), pp. 33-37; Al-Jāḥiẓ, Abū ʿUthmān ʿAmr b. Baḥr, *al-Bayān wa al-Tabyīn*, (Beirut: Dār Ṣaʿb, n.d.), pp. 574-575.

⁴⁶. When he was asked to recite what had been said to him, spontaneously he said ' mā anā bi qārī' which means that 'I am not able to recite'. The majority of scholars, for instance al-Baghdādī and the modern scholar Muḥammad Ḥamīdullah believe that Muḥammad was in complete illiteracy. He could neither read nor write. Ibn Ḥajar is of the opinion that the above phrase renders the meaning that he is not good in reading (*mā uḥsin al-qirāʾah*) meaning that he was able to read but not good at it. al-Ghazālī argues that it is impossible for someone to memorize all of what he learnt and listened to. He of course must be in need of the ability to write (*ilm kitābat al-khaṭṭ*). Thus according to al-Ḥāfiẓ al-ʿIrāqī (*hāmish of Iḥyāʾ* of al-Ghazālī) the hadith that the Prophet was illiterate actually refers to the situation where he was not good in writing. See al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Riḥlah fī Ṭalab al-Ḥadīth*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1975), p. 12; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, op. cit., 1:30. See also al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 1:27 and Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *Taḥrīr al-Maqāl fī ʿĀdāb wa Ahkām wa Fawā'id Yaḥtāj ilayhā Mu'addibū al-Aṭfāl*, (Dimashq, Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 1987), p. 83; Ḥamīdullah, op. cit., p. 51.

what he knows not.

Muslim reports this account in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, that ʿĀʾishah the mother of the faithful believers narrated:

The commencement of the divine inspiration to Allah's Apostle was in the form of good dreams which came like bright daylight and then the love of seclusion was bestowed upon him.

He used to go in seclusion in the cave of Ḥirāʾ, where he used to worship (Allah alone) continuously for many days regardless of his family.

He used to take with him food for the stay and then come back to (his wife) Khadijah to take his food likewise again, till suddenly the truth descended upon him while he was in the Cave of Ḥirāʾ.

The angel came to him and asked him to recite. The Prophet replied: "I do not know how to recite". The Prophet added, "the angel caught me (forcibly) and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it anymore.

He then released me to read and I replied, "I do not know how to recite". Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time till I could not bear anymore.

He then released me and again asked me to read, but again I replied, I do not know how to read (or what shall I recite?).

Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said: recite,

"In the name of your Lord, who created, created man from a clot. Recite! and your Lord is the most bountiful. He who taught (the use of)the pen, taught men that which he knew not".⁴⁷

⁴⁷. al-Nawawī, op. cit., 2:197-200.

Gabriel read these five verses, the very beginning of the Qur'ān text, three times. The idea was to facilitate the recitation of the Qur'ān into Muḥammad's heart. Why three times? Obviously someone would face difficulty in memorizing any new reading materials or sentences had he been given only one chance.

Similarly in this case it is certain that Muḥammad would not have been able to memorize the verses with only one reading by the teacher, and furthermore he was illiterate. The main aim is to get familiar with the idea and to understand the conceptual part of the teaching.

In this case memorization is very important since there were no writing materials available at that very moment. Therefore, three times is considered sufficient for someone to get the idea or at least to memorize it. Sometimes four and above is considered normal practice for anyone who is less capable in understanding and memorizing⁴⁸. Therefore, later when he taught his companions, the Prophet used to repeat especially important matters three

⁴⁸. There are many incidents where the Prophet read or recited something three times in order to facilitate understanding. al-Bukhārī reports a hadith related by Anas that when he spoke (to someone) he repeated it three times until the addressee was made to understand (his idea). Muslim narrates a hadith that the Prophet used to invoke God three times in his supplication. Similarly when he asked something he said it three times. al-Nawawī claims that this is not necessary and did not occur every time. To him three times in repeating is something commendable and to show that the issue is so important that it needs stress. See *Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī*, op. cit., 1:227. al-Nawawī, op. cit., 12:152.

times⁴⁹. Another aspect is that from the very beginning the Prophet was taught to be aware of the importance and significance of the revelation. Nothing is to be ignored. Whatever the idea given to him is considered *Rabbānī* in nature which is related to the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe. Effort has to be made in paying attention to it and to get the inner meaning of it. Though the use of the word 'pen' was not meant in his time for glorifying the Creator, instead of glorifying poems and poets, he was of the opinion that the final aim was to clarify God's idea in his life. Whoever associates himself with the creator is considered a liar and untruthful (*kadhhdhāb*).

Revelation was given to Muḥammad in several ways. There are many suggestions as to how the Prophet received the revelation⁵⁰.

- i. Like the ringing of a bell⁵¹. He grasped what was inspired.
- ii. The angel came in the form of a man and talked to him and he grasped whatever he said.
- iii. The angel blew upon him and blew the utterance right into his mind.
- iv. The angel inspired him in his dream.

⁴⁹. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al-Aʿẓamī, *Dirāsāt fī al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī*, (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1985), p. 329 (hereafter cited as *Dirāsāt*).

⁵⁰. Revelation should be distinguished from a mere inspiration.

⁵¹. Gabriel is said to have come to Muḥammad with this sound. This form of revelation is the hardest. See Jalāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Suyūṭī, *al-Itqān fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān*, (Baydār: Manshūrāt al-Riḍā, 1343H), 1:160.

v. The prophet spoke to his God either in a waking state or in a dream⁵².

It would be worthwhile to note that not all the methods mentioned are related to the revelation of the Qur'ān. Some may suggest that the Qur'anic verses were revealed only by an angel and not by any other agent⁵³.

In this regard Suyūfī has quoted Juwaynī's saying as follows:

The revealed speech of Allah is of two kinds: as to the first kind Allah said to Gabriel: tell the Prophet to whom I sent you that Allah tells him to do this and this, and He ordered him something. So Gabriel understood what his Lord had told him. Then, he descended with it to the Prophet and told him what his Lord had told him, but the expression is not the (same) expression, just as a king says to someone upon whom he relies: tell so and so: the king says to you : strive in his service and gather your army for fighting... and when the messenger (goes and) says: the king tells you: do not fail in my service and do not let the army break up, and call for fighting, etc... Then he has not lied nor shortened the (message)...and as to the other kind, Allah says to Gabriel: read to the Prophet this piece of writing and Gabriel descended with it from Allah, without uttering it in the least, just as (if) the king writes a written (instruction) and hands it over to his trustworthy (servant) and says (to him): read it to so and so...⁵⁴

Suyūfī says that the Qur'ān belongs to the second kind, and the first kind is the *sunnah*, and from this derives the reporting of the *sunnah* according

⁵². *ibid.* 1:161.

⁵³. *ibid.* pp. 160-161.

⁵⁴. *ibid.*, p. 159

to the meaning, unlike the Qur'ān⁵⁵.

In order to make Muḥammad understand the verses first revealed to him, God enabled him to memorize the verses revealed. In memorizing the verses he not only memorized the verses but also the ideas behind them.

In order to retain the verses in his heart, Muḥammad made himself repeat them many a time till he felt difficulty in repeating all the verses conveyed to him every now and then.

To facilitate the learning and retention of the verses God informed him that it was His duty to instil the words of revelation in his heart. In *sūrat al-Qiyāmah*(75):16-17 we read "move not thy tongue concerning the (Qur'ān) to make haste therewith. It is for us to collect it and to promulgate it: and in verse 18 "but when we have promulgated it, follow thou its recital (as promulgated): in *sūrat Ṭāhā*(20):114, High above all his God. The king, the Truth! be not in haste with the Qur'ān before its revelation to thee is completed, but say, ! Oh my Lord! Advance me in knowledge". In *sūrat al-A'lā*(87):6 we read " by degrees shall we teach thee to declare (the message), so thou shalt not forget".

⁵⁵. ibid..

Every time he received the revelation he tried his best to memorize it. The same happened with his companions. Some of them memorized it.

Those whose memory was weak were allowed to write it down on whatever suitable materials were available⁵⁶.

Another method of teaching the Qur'ān demonstrated by Gabriel to Muḥammad is *mudārasah* or *mu'āraḍah*, that is to recite the revelation to each other while correcting mistakes if any. Sometimes Muḥammad listened attentively to the recitation of Gabriel to make sure that he obtained the most correct reading of the Qur'ān, and at other times he read it while Gabriel listened and corrected if there were any mistakes⁵⁷. This resulted in making the Prophet more refreshed in his mind with the Qur'ānic ideas. This happened only during the month of Ramaḍān when Muslims are earnestly

⁵⁶. In the beginning of Islam, writing was allowed for the Qur'ānic verses only. Hadiths of the Prophet were prohibited to be written for the Prophet was worried about their mixture with the Qur'ān. Later permission was given especially to those who were weak in memorizing and when the worry was clearly avoided. This allowance was extended not only to jotting down hadiths from him but also other types of knowledge. At first the Qur'ān was recorded on scraps of Parchment (*raqq*), leather, tablets of stone, ribs of palm branches, camel ribs and shoulder blades and pieces of wooden board. Paper (*qirṭās*) was known to Arabs even before Islam. It is mentioned in the Qur'ān and was among utensils of writing used in pre-Islamic Arabia, but it is not clear whether or not this material was utilized in the very early days for the recording of the Qur'ān and sunnah. Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī has specifically written a book on the writing (*kitābah*) issue by quoting almost all related narrations about it. See Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taqyīd al-ʿIlm*, (n.p.: Dār al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyyah, 1974). Special attention is to be given to pages 29-36, 49, and 64-70. See also al-Namarī al-Qurṭubī, op. cit., pp. 63-76. Hamidullah, op. cit., p. 51. Mohammad Mustafa Azmi, *Studies in Early Hadith Literature*, (Indianapolis: American Trust Publication, 1978), p. 200.

⁵⁷. Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī, op. cit., 1:40-41.

urged to be more observant in respect of their religion⁵⁸. During the last Ramaḍān witnessed by the Prophet he was twice taught according to this type of method and by this he came to know that he was approaching his end⁵⁹.

Another point worthwhile to be raised here concerns the objectives of the revelation. The first and the foremost is that the Qur'ānic verses were gradually revealed to Muḥammad. The revelation was not made all at once. The verses were revealed according to the need of people. The reasons why the verses were revealed are dealt with under the topic of Causes of Revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*). However these causes or reasons have their own reasons or objectives. Scrutinizing the contents of the Qur'ān we are content to say that they were revealed in response to issues and problems faced by the people. One of them is the Prophet's answers to questions posed to him. For instance, when Muḥammad was asked about the soul (*rūḥ*) and he did not know what the answer was, *sūrat al-Isrā'*(17):85 was revealed in order to furnish him with the answer. When he was asked about women's menstrual courses (*ḥayḍ*), *sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):222 was revealed. Secondly, it acted as a challenge to those who opposed its ideas. In *sūrat al-Naḥl* (16):43, for instance, God challenged the unbelievers (Meccan pagans) to check the validity of sending Muḥammad as His messenger from the people of the Books (*ahl al-*

⁵⁸. *ibid.*, 1:41, and 8:659-670.

⁵⁹. *ibid.*, 8:659.

Kitāb)⁶⁰. Being a mortal does not invalidate his ability to be God's messenger. This was God's will in sending a human being to be his messenger even before Muḥammad's appointment. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):23 was revealed as a challenge to those who did not believe in the authenticity of the Qur'ān. God asked those people to bring a single *sūrah* as a challenge to his revelation. In the Qur'ān, there are many other verses in which challenges to those unbelievers are made. The verses challenge them with the same word namely; produce or bring (*i'tū*). The third is an order or an instruction given to Muslims in matters related either to their daily life or to their religion. There are many examples of this type of objective. For instance, *sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):21, asks people (*al-nās*) to adore God alone. Verse 41 of the same *surah* instigates the *Banū Isrā'īl* to believe in what Muḥammad conveyed to them. Verse 43 also of the same *surah* asks Muslims to be steadfast in prayer and practise regular charity. The last but not least objective is to give stories of the previous people so that they could ponder over the results of those people's action, either in the form of reward from God for their good deeds or punishment for their evil actions. Therefore, it is the behaviour of the personalities described in the stories, not their personal attributes in themselves which are the central aim. The stories of the past nations deal with the common theme, i.e. the struggle between good and evil, which results in

⁶⁰. See Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*, (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa Awlāduh, 1968), 14:108. Just as God asked Muḥammad to ask the people of the Book if he is in doubt about his own status. See *sūrat Yūnus* (10):94.

the defeat of the latter⁶¹, for instance the defeat of the nation of ʿĀd which at one time was the strongest in their time⁶².

The most difficult aspect of revelation is to understand and to practise injunctions and orders and to translate them into reality. There must be steps of understanding. Measures must be taken to regulate oneself in a situation where the verses and their understanding can easily be manipulated.

Based on the verses above, it is very obvious that efforts must be made to understand the Qurʾān. The recitation must be correct according to how Gabriel recited it. Hurrying has to be avoided not only due to its association with Satan⁶³ but also it would harm someone and naturally would result in difficulty to the Prophet⁶⁴. On top of that it is feared that the idea of revelation would be misconstrued and misunderstood since it is not yet completed⁶⁵. Many a time we find that a thing which is acquired and

⁶¹. ʿAbdullāh, op. cit., p. 176.

⁶². See *sūrat al-Aʿrāf* (7):65-72, *sūrat Hūd* (11):50-60, *sūrat Ibrāhīm* (14):9-14, *sūrat al-Shuʿarāʾ* (26):123-139, *sūrat Fuṣṣilat* (41):15-16, *sūrat al-Aḥqāf* (46):21-25, *sūrat al-Dhāriyāt* (51):41-42, *sūrat al-Najm* (53):50, *sūrat al-Qamar* (54):18-20, *sūrat al-Hāqqah* (69):6-8 and *sūrat al-Fajr* (89):6-8.

⁶³. There is a hadith which says that *ʿal-ʿajalah min al-shayṭān wa al-taʿannī min Allāh Taʿālā* which means hurry comes from Satan and deliberateness comes from Allāh. This hadith is in support of the idea of the Qurʾān, *sūrat al-Anbiyāʾ* (21):37 which means man is a creature of haste, *sūrat al-Isrāʾ* (17):11 which means man is given to hasty (deeds) and *sūrat Tāhā* (20):114 which means be not in haste with the Qurʾān before its revelation to thee is completed. See al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 3:151. See also *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil al-Imām al-Ghazālī, Risālat al-Qisṭās al-Mustaḳīm*, (Beirut:Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1986), p. 14 (hereafter cited as *Majmūʿat Rasāʾil*).

⁶⁴. al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., 29:188.

⁶⁵. *ibid.*

established in a hurried manner, without proper planning, all the more if it is established as a result of jealousy and ill-feeling to others, is not long lasting⁶⁶. In this regard, Sayyid Quṭb holds the idea that without patience there would be no success but failure and loss⁶⁷. In sum, it should be noted that the important thing is the understanding and the practice of the teaching which is the most valuable aspect of revelation, not the memorization⁶⁸. This is in fact the fruit of the learning process which is guaranteed by Allah to any of his servants⁶⁹.

al-Ghazālī mentions several steps to be taken in order to facilitate memorization and understanding of the divine revelation, especially for children. In his *magnum opus Iḥyā'*, he suggests that memorization should be

⁶⁶. Jamaluddin Md. Ali, the present General Manager of Johore Investment Limited, cites a case where a big company collapsed due to impatience, jealousy and ill-feeling towards its rival. He equates this case to the advice given by Manfred Kets Vries to entrepreneurs in his article "The Dark Side of Entrepreneurship", *Harvard Business Review*, Nov-Dec. 1985. For further discussion see *Mingguan Malaysia*, Halaman Bistari, Sunday, June 4th, 1995, p. 7. As opposed to this, see the lifestyle and attitudes of a present successful businessman on the same page entitled "Biar hidup mewah, jangan hidup kaya" (Let us live in prosperity, not rich or wealthy). To him living in prosperity means to share bounties with others while living in richness is to be selfish and uncaring personality.

⁶⁷. Exhortation and advice with patience (*ṣabr*) will add the strength and potency (*al-maḡdarah*)..., otherwise there would be failure and loss (*al-khusrān wa al-ḡiyā'*). Quṭb, op. cit., 6:3968. See also *sūrat al-Tawbah* (9):42.

⁶⁸. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Kayf Nata'āmal ma'a al-Qur'ān*, (Herndon, Virginia: IIIT, 1991), pp. 25-26.

⁶⁹. In *sūrat al-Mā'idah*(5):16, we read, "Yahdī bihi Allah man ittaba'a riḡwānahū subul al-salām wa yukhrijuhum min al-ẓulumāt ilā al-nūr bi idhnihī wa yahdīhim ilā ṣirāṭ mustaqīm" which means, Wherewith God guideth all who seek his good pleasure to ways of peace and safety and leadeth them out of darkness, by His will unto the light, guideth them to a path that is straight. In *sūrat al-An'ām*(6):127 we read, "lahum dār al-salām 'ind Rabbihim wa huwa waliyyuhum bimā kānū ya'malūn" which means, for them will be a Home of Peace in the presence of their Lord: He will be dear friend, because they practised (righteousness).

accompanied by understanding (*fahm*), belief (*i'tiqād*), certainty (*īqān*) and faith (*taṣdīq*). To reinforce this he proposes that children should be kept busy with reading the Qur'ān and its exegesis, reading hadith and its understanding and performing ritual obligations⁷⁰. In his treatise *Ayyuhā al-Walad*, he explains extensively the idea of being a good servant of God. In the first place he suggests that it is not sufficient to be knowledgeable, but that to perform good *akhlāq* accordingly is the ultimate aim of our life. He warns his students not to indulge in matters which are not related to religion⁷¹. He stresses the utilization of our life according to the nature of the human being. Otherwise, we would be in jeopardy. Whoever achieves forty years of age and his blameworthy traits are heavier in weight than his praiseworthy traits in the eyes of God, he should be prepared to be thrown into hell fire⁷². According to him this short advice is sufficient for those who wish to think and devote themselves to knowledge⁷³.

al-Zarnūjī in his treatise⁷⁴ stresses the idea that there are many habits to be observed in order to bring some one to the true path of learning. Among

⁷⁰. al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā'*, 1:123.

⁷¹. He quotes a hadith which says that among the pieces of evidence of God's shunning (*īrād*) of one of His servants is that he is kept busy with something which is not related to religion, as being busy in this state of condition will cause them long grief. al-Ghazālī, *Majmū'at Rasā'il*, p. 152.

⁷². *ibid.*

⁷³. *ibid.*

⁷⁴. *Kitāb Ta'līm al-Muta'allim Ṭarīq al-Ta'allum*, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1986).

other things he advises children to avoid the means of forgetfulness such as taking the wrong food, looking at a cross, passing through a file of camels and throwing live lice on the ground⁷⁵. The stress is on the habits and practices of the people during his time some of which are suggested neither by the Qur'ān nor by the hadith of the Prophet, but are more on the basis of *ʿādat*, *ʿurf* or the customs of the people in his time⁷⁶. They are no longer valid now though they might be observed in certain parts of the present-day world. However, there are certain pieces of advice that are worthy to be looked into such as the causes of poverty, the ethics of cleanliness and health such as not sleeping naked, eating on one side (*janb*), sweeping the house with a handkerchief, stitching cloth while it is on the body, drying the face with a cloth, neglecting prayer, hurry in getting out of the mosque after the morning prayer, going very early to market, avoiding washing hands with clay, taking too much food or drink etc. Apart from this, he proposes a list of methods of teaching and learning which is still practical⁷⁷. Other than that he advises the learner not to commit sinful acts, for this could take him away from the light (*nūr*) of God. He then cites a poem composed by al-Shāfiʿi;

shakawtu ilā Wakīʿ sūʿa ḥifẓī

fa arshadanī ilā tark al-maʿāṣī

⁷⁵. *ibid.*, p. 173.

⁷⁶. *ʿUrf* and *ʿādat* sometimes is taken into account by the jurists as one of the valid source of Islamic Law.

⁷⁷. al-Zarnūjī allocates a separate topic in his book to discuss his ideas on the methodology of teaching namely; *Faṣl fī Bidāyat al-Sabq wa Qadrih wa Tartībih*.

fa inn al-ḥifẓ faḍl min Ilāhī

*wa faḍl Allāh lā yuhdā li ʿāṣī*⁷⁸

which means,

I complained to (my teacher) Wakīʿ about my poor memory

So he advised me to avoid sinful acts

For verily memory is a favour from God

And the favour of God will not be given to a sinner

Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr al-Namarī al-Qurṭubī also has his own proposal in dealing with this issue. He suggests that memorization is to be done while a student is young (*fī ṣiḡhariḥ*). He should be allowed to keep written material that he can refer to if he forgets. He must always involve himself in discussion (*mudhākarah*)⁷⁹. He should avoid bad traits especially self-complacency (*ʿjāb*) and anger⁸⁰. However, the most important factor in memorizing any subject is continuous reference to books (*idmān al-naẓar fī al-kutub*)⁸¹. This advice

⁷⁸. al-Zarnūjī, op. cit., p. 170. There is a variation of wording for this famous saying of Shāfiʿī. Apart from the first two verses, the variant reading is,

wa qāl lī bi anna al-ḥikma nūr

wa nūr Allāh lā yuhdā li ʿāṣī

which means, and he said to me that knowledge is a light and the light of Allāh will certainly not be given to a sinner.

⁷⁹. al-Namarī al-Qurṭubī, op. cit., 1:108.

⁸⁰. *ibid.*

⁸¹. *ibid.*, 2:204.

originally came from al-Bukhārī⁸², the greatest *muḥaddith*, who committed to memory when he was young no less than 15,000 hadith and by the time he composed his *Ṣaḥīḥ* had memorized about 600,000 hadith⁸³.

Many prophetic traditions have warned us not to be involved in any unhealthy or immoral action. Action or behaviour is related to the inner human being (*al-qalb*)⁸⁴. Therefore, any misconduct committed by someone is in fact a manifestation of the sickness of his inner self. Thus knowledge is something which is related to *akhlāq* from the Islamic perspective⁸⁵. A man of knowledge⁸⁶ is not a truly knowledgeable person if he does not practise

⁸². al-Bukhārī gives this advice in response to a question asking him about the medicine of memorization (*dawā' li al-ḥifẓ*). Similar advice was given by al-Māwardī and al-Zarnūjī. al-Māwardī uses the term *ilāmat al-naẓar*, while al-Zarnūjī uses the term *tikrār*. See, al-Māwardī, *op. cit.*, p. 57; al-Zarnūjī, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

⁸³. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yan*, (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1968) 4:190.

⁸⁴. See for example, the Qur'ān *sūrat al-A'rāf* (7):179. Omar, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁸⁵. 'Ilm or knowledge is considered something sacred and a gift from God. He gives it to anyone He wishes. Knowledge is supposed to be used for the welfare of human beings and to protect the nature of the universe. Therefore, a knowledgeable man is actually a counsellor (*murabbī*), a teacher (*mu'allim*) and a spiritual leader. He is a successor of the Prophet (*warathat al-anbiyā'*). He is considered a part and parcel of the *mujāhidūn* (the strugglers for the sake of God). Thus he takes a higher place in the eyes of God and he will surely be blessed with peaceful life both in this world as well as in hereafter. See Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *op. cit.*, 1:170. al-Namārī al-Qurṭubī, *op. cit.*, 1:50, 51, 60. al-Māwardī, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41, 44.

⁸⁶. A man of knowledge is mentioned in the Qur'ān as the most powerful creature of God in the story of Prophet Solomon. When Solomon wanted to bring the palace of Queen Bilqīs, no one matched this knowledgeable man. The Qur'ān tells us that he brought the Queen's palace before Solomon in a second, *qabl an yartadda ilaik ṭarfuk*, as compared to a jinnī who took a longer time, *qabl an taqūm min maqāmik*, that is before Solomon stood up from his throne. The authors of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* believe that the man was Āṣaf b. Barkhayā, the scribe of Solomon. Ibn Kathīr mentions three variants names from different sources namely; Āsif or Balikhā according to Qatādah, and Uṣṭūm according to Mujāhid. According to al-Ṭabarī his name was Balikhā. His supplication before he discharged his duty is known as *al-Isim al-A'zam* or *al-Isim al-Akbar*. See the Qur'ān *sūrat al-Naml* (27):40 and the discussion of the verse *wa qāl al-ladhī 'indahū 'ilm min al-kitāb ana ātika bihī qabl an yartadd ilayk ṭarfuk* in Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Ṣuyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-*

what he learns as much as possible⁸⁷. In the case of Āṣaf b. Barkhayā we find that before he asked his God, he stood up and made ablution as a sign of purification internally (as a scribe to the Prophetical King he should have been physically clean)⁸⁸. This is a sign of a practicing man.

What we can deduce from the discussions above is that understanding (*fahm*) is the essence and the core of revelation. No one can disregard the Qur'anic stance on it.

From *sūrat al-Naḥl* (16):18, it is obvious that the Qur'ān is a reminder to people. The reminder would not be manifested in this world unless it is to be understood in accordance with the desire of the Creator. However people are not in the position of understanding the actual teachings and ideas of their God unless they are taught about it by the revealer.

In this case the role of Gabriel as the first revealer is vital and the role of the Prophet Muḥammad as the revealer to human beings is indispensable.

⁸⁶ *Azīm*, (Cairo: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī Wa Awlāduh, 1342 H), 2:51, Ismā'īl Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAzīm* (Beirut: Dār al-Khayr, 1991), 3:401. al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., 16:162.

⁸⁷ al-Qur'ān condemns a knowledgeable person who does not practise what he learns or purposely does things against his knowledge. In *sūrat al-Ṣaff* (61):2 we read; Oh you who believe! Why say ye that which ye do not? There are many other verses which are related to this situation, for instance, *sūrat al-Najm* (53):39, *sūrat al-Kahf* (18):107-108 and 110, *sūrat al-Tawbah* (9):82 and *sūrat al-Furqān* (25):70. In one of his traditions the Prophet Muḥammad said, "the most terrible punishment will be inflicted on a knowledgeable person from whose knowledge Allāh gains nothing (he does not practise his knowledge)". See al-Ghazālī, *Majmūʿat Rasā'il*, p. 152.

⁸⁸ Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 3:401.

Both become the pivot of the life of the truthful; otherwise they are lost in their lives⁸⁹.

Recitation of the Qur'ān in the proper manner is important. Otherwise, it will lead both the readers and the learners into wrong understanding because a wrong reading will certainly bear a different understanding. Gabriel was the first teacher who read it according to the needs of the Creator. Therefore, sometimes we find that the recitation does not follow the specific rules and regulations of the common Arabic language⁹⁰. Hence, scholars of Arabic syntax are in constant dispute over the issue of the sources of Arabic grammar. Some hold the idea that the Qur'ān is one of the sources whereas some others believe that it is not and thus its recitation has to abide by rules and regulations known to the Arabs, the native speakers. Due to this disagreement, there emerged different schools of Arabic grammar, one trying to win over another⁹¹.

⁸⁹. Guidance or *hudā* is something important without which people cannot differentiate values. Depending solely upon one's reasoning ability would cause devastation to human life since men are influenced most of their times by their infinite desire. Certain values like intelligence and beauty are gifted and certain others like generosity and kindness could be acquired by the human power of reasoning.

⁹⁰. Many words of the Qur'an are read differently from an ordinary pronunciation. For instance, in *sūrat Hūd*(11):41, the sentence *wa qāl irkabū fihā bismillāh majrihā wa mursāhā*. The word *majrihā* is read not according to ordinary reading but in a different way, i.e. between *kasrah* and *fathah*. According to the Science of Recitation (*ʿIlm al-Tajwīd*) the rule is called *imālah*. *Pedoman bacaan Qur'ān*, (Kuala Terengganu: Department of Islamic Affairs, 1983), p. 37.

⁹¹. The school of Baṣrah do not accept evidence from the Qur'ān . See Ismail Ngah, "al-Qur'ān sebagai Sumber Utama Tatabahasa Arab", unpublished M.A. Thesis, National University of Malaysia, Bangi, 1985.

Muḥammad was asked to listen attentively to the recitation of Gabriel and was advised not to be in haste. Care and patience are keys in getting the correct reading of the Qur'ān. Memorization will come later especially when one understands and practises the verses accordingly.

1.4. Methodology of the Prophet

As I have mentioned elsewhere Muhammad was the revealer to human beings. He was provided with every single aspect of Qur'ānic teaching notably recitation, memorization, understanding and application of the idea. Since writing was not that popular in his time, people mainly relied on memory⁹². It was a very popular method during this period. They strongly appreciated memorization and this had been shown through their poems proclaimed at several periodical fairs (*aswāq*) such as *Sūq 'Ukāz*. It is said that there were not more than hundred people in his society who could write and read. Some even believe that those who were able to read and write were not more than sixteen people⁹³. With this typical Arab society in which memorization was a popular method of study, the Prophet had no alternative but to accept this method. He taught his companions through memorization, at the same time giving them examples to be emulated.

⁹². 'Abd al-Raḥīm Ghunaymah, *Tārīkh al-Jāmi'āt al-Islāmiyyah al-Kubrā*, (Taḥwān: Dār al-Ṭibā'ah al-Maghribiyyah, 1953), p. 191.

⁹³. Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, *Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān*, Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Munajjid (ed.), (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1957), p. 580.

Muḥammad taught his companions how to read and understand the Qur'ān. The companions studied the Qur'ān, not only to read but also to understand its verses. They studied the Qur'ān and tried to memorize it⁹⁴. At one time, there were not many verses to be learned. They took a long time to memorize the *sūrahs* of the Qur'ān. Ibn 'Umar was reported to have memorized *Sūrat al-Baqarah* within eight years⁹⁵. The Companions are said to have learned the Qur'ān in the Mosque. Al-Ḥākim al-Naysābūrī has reported the situation where the companions used to be in their circle to study the Qur'ān or to memorize it in a group. Sometimes they listened to the recitation of the Qur'ān from their colleagues⁹⁶.

Those who were absent from the lessons given by the Prophet would be taught by their colleagues. On many occasions some of the companions were not always together with the Prophet, because they were busy with their daily obligations, such as looking after the herds and camels⁹⁷. The Prophet is reported to have said "you all listened to me and (those who were absent) should listen to you. The others should also listen to those who listened to

⁹⁴. al-Suyūṭī, op. cit., 4:202.

⁹⁵. *ibid.*, 4:202.

⁹⁶. al-Ḥākim, op. cit., 1:173

⁹⁷. *ibid.*, 1:174.

you⁹⁸.

The companions were very careful to study the Qur'ān. They would not memorize it merely for the purpose of memorization but more for understanding and practising⁹⁹. They could do this because there were not many subjects to be studied. According to al-Ḥākim, the other subject to be studied by them was the tradition of the Prophet¹⁰⁰.

With this method we find that many of his companions were concerned with the memorization of the Qur'ān, insofar as some of them were known as *ḥuffāẓ*. It is said that during the battle of Mu'tah¹⁰¹ there were hundreds of the companions killed and this had alarmed the second caliph as to the danger of this situation had there been no action taken to preserve the Qur'ān because the loss of Qur'ānic reciters would result in the loss of the Qur'ān to the people. This is said to have been a factor which expedited the suggestion to compile the Qur'ān by 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb to the first caliph Abū Bakr. The task was given to a group of the great companions who in the time of the

⁹⁸. The hadith is; *tasma'ūn wa yasma' minkum wa yasma' min al-ladhīn (min man) yasma' minkum*. See al-Ḥākim, op. cit., 1:174. al-Bukhārī relates another hadith with the same meaning; *...wal yuballigh al-shāhid al-ghā'ib* which means, the one who is present has to inform the one who is absent. See Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, op. cit., 1:238.

⁹⁹. al-Suyūṭī, op. cit., 4:202.

¹⁰⁰. al-Ḥākim, op. cit., 1:173.

¹⁰¹. Another incident was the battle of Bī'r Ma'ūnah, where about seventy *ḥuffāẓ* are said to have been killed. See al-Nawawī, op. cit., 5:179.

Prophet had been his scribes, led by Zayd b. Thābit, his most famous scribe.

The Prophet used the same method as used by Gabriel to teach his companions, that is memorizing and understanding. It went from mouth to mouth (*mushāfahah*). The Prophet recited three, four, five and up to ten verses¹⁰².

Another method used by the Prophet was to ask his companions to read him verses of the Qur'ān. By doing this he measured the correct reading and the understanding of the Companions. It was reported that he used to ask ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd to read verses of the Qur'ān to him. When he reached *surat al-Nisā'*(4):41, he saw the Prophet break into tears¹⁰³.

The last method used by the Prophet was to teach the Qur'ān together with giving explanations and expounding the laws based on the Qur'ān.

This method of studying the Qur'ān produced a great number of *Qurṛā'* (reciters) from both the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār. Among the most famous were Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, Muʿāwiyah, ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Zubayr from the Muhājirūn and from *the Anṣār*, we find Ubayy b. Kaʿb, Muʿādh b.

¹⁰². al-Suyūṭī, op. cit., 1:156.

¹⁰³. He was touched by the understanding of the verse *fakayf idhā ji'nā min kull ummah bi shahīd wa ji'nā bik ʿalā hā'ulā' shahīdā*. Ibn Ḥajar aʿAsqalānī, op. cit., 8:619. al-Nawawī, op. cit., 6:86-87.

Jabal, Abū Dardā', Zayd b. Thābit, and Anas b. Mālik. Among his wives there were ʿĀ'ishah, Ḥafṣah and Umm Salamah.

Though memorization was the popular method of learning the Qur'ān, it did not stop them from writing the verses in their *ṣuḥuf*. Those who were able to write the Qur'ān were allowed to do so. Therefore, at the end of his life we find that many versions of the Qur'ānic texts were found in the hands of several companions to the extent that it caused problems to the *ummah* in recognizing the true picture of the writing. Even though the Qur'ān was standardized in terms of its wording pattern at the time of Abū Bakr and refined by ʿUthmān later, still the reading varied among the *Qurra'* of the Companions¹⁰⁴.

The collection of the Qur'ān and its preservation, be it in the memory of the companions or in the texts, provided a stable basis for the Muslim's pattern in the pursuit of knowledge. It was not sufficient to exalt knowledge while continuing to rely on memory alone. However, we find that all the while the force of this movement appears to have been directed to adult education and there is little concrete evidence¹⁰⁵ to show that something equally

¹⁰⁴. These various readings of the Qur'ān are known as *al-qirā'āt*. Ibn al Jazarī has written a book on this issue entitled *al-Nashr fī al-Qirā'āt al-ʿAshr*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, n.d.).

¹⁰⁵. For instance the story of the prisoners taken at Badr. Most of the prisoners made themselves free by teaching reading and writing to the Muslim children of Medina. See al-Māwardī, op. cit., p. 60. See also al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., 10:43.

constructive was done for primary education. Removal of illiteracy in the sense of acquiring a facility in reading and writing, was on the whole an individual personal affair for which the state took no responsibility¹⁰⁶.

1.5. Methodology of the Companions

The companions were very busy in stabilizing the new state after the demise of the Prophet. Abū Bakr was kept busy in keeping people on the true path of Islam as many of them became apostates. Apart from his effort to collect the portions of *ṣuḥuf* into a *muṣḥaf* nothing much had been done on education. ʿUthmān the third caliph, apart from undertaking such developments as erecting new buildings¹⁰⁷, was kept busy defending his style of management against rebellious groups, as was the fourth Caliph ʿAlī. However, ʿUmar the second caliph had done something on this matter. Schools were opened for the teaching of the Qurʾān throughout the empire and teachers were appointed to teach therein. He allotted a monthly salary to those whose profession was teaching¹⁰⁸. Apart from teaching the Qurʾān, the schools also taught reading and writing¹⁰⁹. He sent many Qurʾānic reciters to the provinces to teach, especially the Qurʾān, to the people. Muʿādh b. Jabal

¹⁰⁶. Tibawi, "Muslim Education", p. 422.

¹⁰⁷. Muḥammad Kurd ʿAlī, *al-Islām wa al-Ḥaqārah al-ʿArabiyyah*, (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah), p. 1:160.

¹⁰⁸. Khalil ʿAthamina "'al-Nabiyy al-Umiyy": An Inquiry into the Meaning of a Qurʾānic Verse", *Der Islam*, Band 69, 1992, p. 72, citing Ibn ʿAsākir, 6:415. See also Shiblī Nuʿmānī, *ʿUmar the Great*, (tr. Muhammad Saleem), Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1957, p. 141.

¹⁰⁹. Nuʿmānī, *ibid.*, p. 142.

was stationed in Palestine, ʿUbādah b. al-Ṣāmit was sent to Ḥimṣ and Abū Dardāʾ to Damascus¹¹⁰. ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ was a preacher and his representative in Egypt¹¹¹. Apart from sending these emissaries, he sent letters of instruction time and again to his officials instructing and reminding them on certain issues including diffusing knowledge in their provinces. He recommended that boys should learn the art of swimming¹¹². Goldziher is of the opinion that this instruction was largely influenced by foreign, and especially Persian and Greek views¹¹³. However, his claim is refuted by Tibawi who says that this order was solely meant for those on the banks of the Euphrates, the Tigris and the Nile and in towns on the shores of the Mediterranean¹¹⁴. The phrase *ilā sākinī al-amṣār*¹¹⁵ clearly refers to them and not to youth living in arid Hejaz¹¹⁶. Other than that he urged parents to teach their boys the arts of archery, to mount horses swiftly and to appreciate beautiful poetry. He urged people to be well-versed in the teaching of the Qurʾān¹¹⁷ especially five

¹¹⁰. ʿAlī, M.K., op. cit., 1:146.

¹¹¹. ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAlī al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿUmmāl fī Sunan al-Aqwāl wa al-Afāl*, (Hyderabad: Majlis Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyyah, 1955), 5:411.

¹¹². al-Jāḥiẓ, op. cit., 2:304.

¹¹³. I. Goldziher, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1912, s.v. Education (Muslim), 5:200.

¹¹⁴. Tibawi, "Muslim Education", p. 423.

¹¹⁵. al-Jāḥiẓ, op. cit., 2:204.

¹¹⁶. Tibawi, "Muslim Education", p. 423.

¹¹⁷. al-Hindi, op. cit., 5:406. The word *jarriḍū al-Qurʾān* means that he instructed people not to mix learning the Qurʾān with other subjects such as hadith, diacritical marks, linguistics and the like.

sūrahs namely; *al-Baqarah*, *al-Nisā'*, *al-Mā'idah*, *al-Ḥajj* and *al-Nūr*¹¹⁸. To make people proficient in language he recommended them to learn and appreciate beautiful poetry¹¹⁹. In order to make them more useful and productive he urged them to travel. However, prior to conquering the world, they had to master astronomy¹²⁰. According to 'Umar, with knowledge people can govern the world. In one of his popular maxims, *tafaqqahū qabl an tasūddū*¹²¹ which means you have to learn and understand (knowledge) thoroughly before shouldering any responsibility, 'Umar cautions the *ummah* not to take up any leading responsibility before gathering appropriate knowledge and understanding about it. Despite all this, teaching was not yet, to use Ibn Khaldūn's term, a *ṣinā'ah* (a craft), but mere verbal transmission of the teachings of the Prophet¹²².

All in all we can say that the companions followed the Prophet in all aspects, especially in things related to the Qur'ān, including his methodology of its teaching. For example, the people in Ḥimṣ learnt the Qur'ān in a circle and this was praised by Mu'āwiyah because this pattern of studying the

¹¹⁸. Nu'mānī, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

¹¹⁹. 'Abbās Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād, *ʿAbqariyyat ʿUmar*, (Dār al-Hilāl, n.d.), p. 185.

¹²⁰. According to al-ʿAqqād, 'Umar did not allow people to study astrology but he loved people to learn astronomy. *ibid.*, p. 189.

¹²¹. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *op. cit.*, 1:190; al-ʿAqqād, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

¹²². Ibn Khaldūn, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

Qur'ān was practised in the time of the Prophet¹²³.

1.6. Conclusion

In summing up we can say that methodology in Islam not only connotes the ideas of how to transfer knowledge *per se* but also tries to change the attitudes of students and guides them to the intended aim. Islam believes in freedom of thought of a student but it does not allow him to go astray, i.e. to go against its principles. Thus, the task of a teacher in Islam does not end at transmitting knowledge but also enables the teacher to act as a supervisor and a guide to his student. This meaning is enshrined in terms such as *ta'līm*, *ta'dīb*, *tarbiyah*, *tadrīs* and *irshād* which are used to denote the multi-dimensional role of a teacher. According to Islamic teaching, a student should behave according to what he learns and should persistently strive to shape his attitudes higher while he is learning. To change one's evil attitudes to praiseworthy ones is the target. The idea would be effective if it is promoted through a correct methodology. Children would respond to it not only in school, as a training ground, but also in the society. They will always remember the methods, techniques and arts of struggling in promoting ideas and commands initiated by the Prophet and his companions and to live according to the teachings of Islam. With this in mind, we will go further to probe in depth, in the next chapter, the ways and means suggested by Islam to inject and instil good values and ideas in the minds of students in order to

¹²³. al-Ḥākim, op. cit., 1:172-173.

enable them to cope up with their future without departing from Islamic norms and precepts in its golden days.

CHAPTER TWO

Methodology of Teaching: Theories and Practices

2.1. Introduction

This chapter will present a survey of the methodology of teaching in Islam from the Qur'ānic perspective and the practices and norms of scholars and educationists after the demise of the Prophet. It is noteworthy that during the time of the Prophet, educational life was simple in the sense that people were more concerned with emulating and imitating the Prophet's life than with creating and innovating. The reason is simple; the Prophet was amongst them. Should they face any problem they would seek counsel from him. On top of that, they had nothing other than the Qur'ān and the hadith of the Prophet which needed to be discussed. The Prophet taught them the lessons and in response they memorized them.

Things changed after the Prophet passed away. Muslims faced new challenges and problems as well as new nations whose knowledge and civilization were far more advanced. They had no other recourse than to face all these things with their own minds and knowledge. Since they were in need of new approaches in these new situations and environments, a new methodology of teaching and learning came into existence. Although they had nothing to guide them but the Qur'ān and the teaching and learning methods

they had been accustomed to during the time of the Prophet, they found no difficulty in adopting new educational methodology when it was required.

2.2. Definition

It is necessary for us to have a sufficient idea of what teaching methodology is all about, since otherwise it would not be possible for us to develop the discussion. What is sure is that none of the classical Islamic works on education gives a clear cut definition of the subject. However, they do contain general ideas, practical techniques and interpretations of certain concepts of education which could be taken as providing the elements of a methodology of teaching.

However, to start with, it would be best to discuss some of the modern definitions that could be used as bases for our discussion.

According to Muḥammad ʿAṭiyyah al-Abrāshī, a modern Egyptian philosopher of education¹ the method of teaching is a path by which we make students understand any subject or lesson taught to them. It is a plan made for us before we enter the classroom so that we can implement it when we are in there².

¹. He has written more than fifty two books on education and its related areas. al-Abrāshī, op. cit., pp. 293-295.

². al-Shaybānī, op. cit., p. 402.

Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Raḥīm Ghunaymah maintains that the method of teaching consists of practical ways by which the aims and objectives of teaching are implemented³.

Ṣāliḥ ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and his colleague ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʿAbd al-Majīd agree with Kilpatrick, an American educationist⁴, that the phrase 'teaching method' has two meanings; the narrow meaning which refers to transmitting information, and the wide and all-embracing meaning which is transmitting not only information but opinions, manners of thinking and so on⁵.

Edgar Bruce Wesley has given three definitions of the method of teaching. According to him it could be defined as a series of guided activities of teachers which stimulate the process of learning among students, or secondly it is a process whose complete implementation produces a learning process, or lastly it can be viewed as a path by which teaching becomes effective⁶.

Langgulung adopts the idea that anything which leads to a more effective process of learning-teaching is considered a method of teaching

³. Ghunaymah, op. cit., p. 177.

⁴. al-Shaybānī, op. cit, p. 403.

⁵. Ṣāliḥ ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ʿAbd al-Majīd, *al-Tarbiyah wa Ṭuruq al-Tadrīs*, (Cairo: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif, n.d.), 1:239.

⁶. al-Shaybānī, op. cit, p. 403.

because it is actually an answer to the question "how" and not "what" is to be learned which is under the subject of knowledge or contents of education⁷.

Al-Shaybānī has come up with a definition that methodology of teaching from an Islamic perspective is all guided activities which are done by teachers in aspects of subjects taught, the moulding of pupils' characters, the environment and target that assist the pupils to achieve the aimed process of learning and the changes needed in their behaviour, and to assist them in gaining information, knowledge, habits, attitudes, interests and values which are needed⁸.

From these definitions of methodology of teaching we can extract several ideas which can be considered its main elements:

- i- Methodology of teaching is the way in which teachers make pupils understand and channel their behaviours in line with the intended aims.
- ii- Apart from giving the pupils information and knowledge it can be considered a tool to help them to acquire good habits, attitudes, and desired values which are variables and thus have a direct link with the learning process.

⁷. Hassan Langgulung, *Asas-Asas Pendidikan Islam*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1991), p. 339.

⁸. al-Shaybānī, *op. cit.*, p. 405.

iii- Implementation of good teaching and changes of patterns in students' life is a basic aim of the teaching process. The success of teaching and its methodology can only be measured through the quality of the learning process which is produced by teaching.

iv- Teaching activity is a guided activity and it has several aspects aimed at attaining the desired learning process. Among activities which are embodied in it are talking and discussion, interpretation, imagination, elaboration, explanation, elucidation and so on.

v- Methodology of teaching is a process. Being a process, it comprises several steps which can be used interchangeably in different subjects. To correlate steps and elements in a process is the main task of a good teacher.

2.3. Importance of Educational Process.

Based on the above-mentioned discussion, no one can question the importance of the learning process. Without the methodology of teaching thoughts, knowledge, experience and attitudes would not be transferred from teachers to students. It acts as a link between them.

Some modern thinkers maintain that the educational process is not a process of inculcating ideas into students' minds by teachers and that the responsibility lies not on the teachers only but also on the students who play the main role in the process of learning. The concept of teaching necessitates

a link between a student and a teacher. Nevertheless, this does not deny the importance of the teaching method in the process of learning. Modern scholars are sure that the educational process will not bear fruit unless it comes from a good and experienced teacher who has wisdom and all the prerequisites and qualifications which help him to qualify as a guide and instructor.

Whatever it is, the process of learning relies mainly on the methodology of teaching, and therefore teaching, guidance and instruction are complementary to each other.

In addition to this, the methodology of teaching is viewed more importantly as a basis on which the teaching profession is valued. Success in the teaching profession is evaluated on the basis of the teaching method. Those who are praised and highly regarded for their method of teaching are the successful teachers. Failure to adapt a good method of teaching will cause a bitter experience in the teaching profession.

Due to the importance of the method of teaching and its high position in the learning process, scholars and educators throughout history have paid great attention to upgrading the position of the methodology of teaching.

Attempts have been made to invent and improve facilities in teaching through audio-visual means such as cassettes, television programmes,

overhead projectors, computers and others which could expedite the achievement of the intended targets in the process of teaching. By using them ideas could be explained far better and the result is more far-reaching.

Muslim educators (*murabbī*) are among the first who emphasized the importance of the methodology of teaching and determined the principles and conditions which should be given the utmost attention. They also mentioned codes of conduct and behaviour that should be observed by teachers as well as students in teaching and acquiring any kind of knowledge. These ideas are explained in such books as al-Ghazali's *Iḥyā'*, Ibn Miskawayh's *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq*, Ibn Khaldūn's *Muqaddimah*, al-Qābisī's *al-Risālah al-Mufaṣṣṣalah*, Ibn Saḥnūn's *Ādāb al-Mu'allimīn*, al-Namarī al-Qurṭubī's *Jāmi' Bayān al-'Ilm*, al-Zarnūjī's *Ta'līm al-Muta'allim* and many others.

2.4. Classification of the Methodology of Teaching.

We shall now discuss the classification of the methods of teaching. Books on Islamic education have mentioned that the methods of teaching are varied and are applied according to factors such as; aims of education, subjects or courses of teaching, level of development, level of teaching, level of maturity physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially, past experience and talent, teachers and educators and lastly the situation and environments which affect the teaching process. Thus it is extremely difficult to arrive at a clear-cut classification of methods of teaching because of the variations in

points of views. Some might classify them based on types of subject, some based on ways of thinking and some on characteristics of patterns of teaching⁹.

Teaching for memorization is different from teaching to achieve understanding and to instil ideals, attitudes, feelings and interests or hobbies. Teaching religious subjects or religious knowledge is different from teaching geography, physical or applied arts.

Methods for teaching children are not suitable for adults. Methods for beginners are not suitable for advanced learners. Methods for the bright are not suitable for the weak. Methods used by prominent teachers are not suitable for non-experienced teachers or those who are limited in experience.

Whatever method is applied by a teacher it should be at his own preference and ease and none should be forced on him. He has the right and the prerogative to choose whatever method of teaching suits him and his subject, the aims to be achieved, the ability of his students and the environment that surrounds him. He may even select elements from various methods of teaching and merge two or three methods together for a subject. The most important thing for the teacher is that he should have been

⁹. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and ‘Abd al-Majīd, op. cit., 1:239.

convinced of the aims, principles and prerequisites of the methods he chooses.

All methods of teaching introduced by the scholars could be classified according to their main elements as follows¹⁰:

- i- Based on materials and tools such as books, laboratories and libraries and projects.
- ii- Based on ways of expressing facts and figures such as utterances, drawings, emulation, visits, participation and others.
- iii- Based on the nature of the subjects. That is the subjects are grouped according to their relevance in respect of time, logic and issue. For instance, those subjects where logic is involved are grouped under logic and so on.
- iv- Based on aims or targets of the teachers such as advice, guidance and supervision, exercises, thinking, deduction, analysis, diagnosis and so on.
- v- Two way relationship between teachers and students. That is through selected projects and assignments given by the teachers to their students, who in turn complete them and give to the former for comments.
- vi- Aims of students, for example problem solving and project papers.
- vii- Two way relationship amongst students, for instance individual

¹⁰. al-Shaybānī, op. cit., pp. 408-410. See also Abdul Raof Dalip "Teknik Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Pengetahuan Agama Islam di Sekolah Menengah", in *Pendidikan Islam Malaysia*, (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1992), p. 166.

activities, activities in the classroom and the method of cooperative activities.

viii- Based on degrees of students' participation in educational process in the form of collective presentation such as choirs and so on.

ix- Based on the level of independent thinking, such as the method of taking early deduction or inference and the method of experiment.

x- Ways of repetition and evaluation, such as oral, written report and written examination.

xi- Based on external senses for instance, sight, hearing and movement.

Most of these methods have been utilised by Muslim educators directly or indirectly, though they did not give them specific titles. Whatever they are, there is no objection from the Islamic point of view to these classifications and methods so long as they are beneficial and suitable to inculcate Islamic ideas and ideals. As far as the methodology of teaching is concerned it is subject to the norms and needs of its society¹¹ because, at the end of the day, any graduate of any school or college will serve his people and society at large and it is the society which provides students with the knowledge it needs. The result is that the curriculum and methodology of teaching differ from one society to another¹² and from one state and stage (*marḥalah*) to another¹³, for Islam does not restrict the pattern of education so long as it serves the purpose

¹¹. Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., p. 596.

¹². Aḥmad Fu'ād al-Ahwānī, *al-Tarbiyah fī al-Islām*, (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1983), p. 176.

¹³. al-Abrāshī, op. cit., p. 151.

of the Muslims¹⁴.

2.5. The Qur'ān; Fundamental Ideas

Muslims believe that Muḥammad is the final prophet sent to mankind. He had devoted all his efforts to ensure that people worked and lived within the framework of his ideas based on what was revealed to him by his Lord, Allah. Thus he acted as a leader¹⁵, a teacher-educator¹⁶, a guide-facilitator¹⁷, a patron¹⁸ and an arbitrator¹⁹ for them.

¹⁴. al-Ahwānī, op. cit., p. 17.

¹⁵. The Qur'ān mentions his position as a leader in various places. For instance in *Āl 'Imrān*(3):159 he is instructed to lead meetings or conferences. In *al-Anfāl*(8):61 he is instructed to make peace with his enemies when they wish to do so (of course with conditions) and in *al-Hujurāt*(49):9-10 to make efforts in order to bring the society to law and order.

¹⁶. In *Qāf*(50):45, one of Muḥammad's responsibilities is to teach society the Qur'ān. In *al-'Aṣr*(103):3 he is expected to teach people to observe the etiquette of telling the truth (*al-ḥaqq*) and observing patience (*ṣabr*) in their life. In *Ṭāhā*(20):32 he is to teach his family (which represents society) the action and manner of prayer, the pillars of Islam and so on.

¹⁷. In *al-Nisā'*(4):36, Allah describes his responsibilities *inter alia* as to instigate people to be obedient to Him and not to take any associate with Him. In *al-Mā'idah*(5):6 Allah orders every believer to clean his bodily life before purifying his spiritual life, *idhā qumtum ila al-ṣalāh faghsilū wujūhakum wa aidiyakum ilā al-marāfiq wa imsaḥū biru'ūsikum wa arjulakum ilā al-ka'bāyn* which details and itemizes the steps of performing ablution before one is allowed to perform his prayer. This is in fact a general instruction. To facilitate the matter and to get thing done perfectly, the Prophet himself demonstrated it before his followers so that they would not fall short or be excessive in their action.

¹⁸. The Qur'ān always instigates and encourages people to seek counsel and patronage from Allah. In *al-Fātiḥah*(1):2 the utterance of praising God and action are both a manifestation of His authority in creation, ownership and sustenance (*rubūbiyyah*), and therefore He deserves absolute praise from His creatures. In *al-Ikhlāṣ*(112):2 He is the pivot of advocacy, counsel and sustenance, and therefore He deserves total magnification and absolute glorification throughout the life of His slaves. However, as His messenger the Prophet acted as His vicegerent and apostle to give patronage to those who ask for it (*al-Mumtaḥanah*(60):10) even though they are not Muslims (*al-Tawbah*(9):6).

¹⁹. In *al-Mā'idah*(5):48, *al-Hujurāt*(49):9-10 and *Ṣād*(38):26 Muḥammad is to act as a judge or arbitrator over whatever matters people dispute. This authority is again stressed in the following verses, *al-Mā'idah*(5):49, *wa an iḥkum baynahum bimā anzal Allah* and in *al-Nisā'*(65) *falā warabbik lā yu'minūn ḥattā yuḥakkimūk fī mā shajara bainahum...*

As a leader he had a very special role in their societal life. However, as a teacher-educator and a guide-facilitator he had a very strong influence on his followers because he was the only source from whom they sought guidance in their life. Their characters and behaviour should be based on teachings and precedents set forth by him²⁰. Any action taken against his teachings is considered null and void and is subjected to punishment in the hereafter, unless repentance is made before death²¹. This idea has been shown in the Qur'ān as follows:

Verily in the messenger of Allah ye have a good example for him who looketh unto Allah and the Last Day, and remembereth Allah much²².

In another verse it is mentioned that Muḥammad is but one of the Messengers and he was preceeded by many messengers²³.

As a prophet and a messenger of God, Muhammad was expected not only to be the preacher of His message but also to act and behave in such

²⁰. His *sunnah*; sayings, actions or his tacit approvals, come second after the Qur'ān. He was in fact the lawgiver by himself in matters which the Qur'ān is silent or the interpreter in matters for which the Qur'ānic verses are brief. See for example, *sūrat al-Baqarah*(2):151 and 231; Muṣṭafā al-Sibā'ī, *al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fi'l-Tashrī' al-Islāmī*, (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1985), pp. 47-48 and 376-377; John Burton, *The Sources of Islamic Law*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), p. 11.

²¹. See *sūrat Āl 'Imrān*(3):135, *al-Nisā'*(4):17 and 110 and *al-Anfāl*(8):33. These verses must be read together with *al-Nisā'*(4):59, 65 and the like.

²². *Sūrat al-Aḥzāb*(33):21.

²³. *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān*(3):144.

ways as could attract people and encourage them to emulate him in their life. Thus, to disregard his actions is considered sinful. To refrain from him and undermine his sayings, actions and approvals is cursed by God. To help him and struggle to establish his sunnah is obligatory, for he called people to do good and to avoid evil. That is what good example (*uswah ḥasanah*) is all about²⁴.

In *al-Naḥl*:125 Muḥammad is asked to call people to Islam (*da'wah*) in such a manner that will make people turn to him and listen to his teachings²⁵. However, when he was in power he needed sometimes to consult people (of knowledge) in matters related to life in this world²⁶ though he had his own

²⁴. al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., 21:143; al-Maḥallī and al-Ṣuyūṭī, op. cit., 2:72; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 3:522-3; Quṭb, op. cit., 5:2842-2843.

²⁵. *al-Ḥikmah* and *al-maw'izah al-ḥasanah* are two expressions which if combined together show us the example of a good leader who can sustain hardship during his call. According to Ibn Kathīr, the idea is deduced from the Qur'ān and the sunnah so that people could distinguish the good from the bad. al-Ṭabarī stresses that whatever comes from God and is conveyed by the Prophet, be it direct or indirect revelation, is called *ḥikmah*. For al-Maḥallī and al-Ṣuyūṭī, *ḥikmah* refers to the Qur'ān alone, and *maw'izah ḥasanah* is actually gentle words and good advice. In another verse which complements this idea God enjoins His messenger to refrain from being influenced by bad temper, impatience and rudeness in calling people with the words, *walaw kunta faẓẓan ghalīẓ al-qalb la'n-faḍḍū min ḥawlik*, for this behaviour would certainly cause people to turn away from him and would make his attempts of no avail. Furthermore if he chooses to be prepared to forgive their mistakes and misdeeds *fa'fu 'anhum wa'staghfir lahum*, because this is the highest situation which people of nobility can occupy, they will, as a result, be categorised as *ulū al-'azm*, the men of courage. God describes this when He says *wa laman ṣabar wa ghaḥar fa inna dhālik min 'azm al-umūr*. This is the path of Islam that the messenger was on and this is the promise of God that people of faith are to act accordingly so that they could lead people (*ummah wasaṭa*) to prosperity in this world as well as in the hereafter. See, Ṭabarī, op. cit., 14:194; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 2:652.

²⁶. *Sūrat al-Anfāl*(8):67. This verse was revealed to the Prophet in relation to his decision not to punish the prisoners taken at Badr after the later were defeated. This was a collective decision though 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb opposed that decision. The verse criticised the collective decision as not proper on this special occasion. However, when the Islamic state was strong and stable this punishment was no longer necessary and thus it was abrogated by *sūrat Muḥammad*(47):4 which gave Muslims two choices, either accept ransom or to set them free. See al-Ṣābūnī, *Mukhtaṣar Ibn*

views in that respect. This collective decision would make people more responsible and tolerant since they themselves were involved in the process of decision-making.

The Qur'ān has many objectives. Its main objective is to educate people to serve their Lord no matter who conveys the ideas. It is thus necessary to have ways and means of conveying its ideas to the people so that they may grasp them and act accordingly.

In order not to make its teaching stereotyped and to respond to different questions and occasions, the Qur'ān uses several ways and methods of imparting knowledge to people and making them understand its teachings. Therefore, to achieve the aim of education according to the Qur'ānic outlook, the Qur'ān discusses various methods to which a teacher or educator can refer.

2.5.1. Instruction and Advice.

The most important of the Qur'ānic methods is to give instruction in the forms of either command, recommendation and advice or interdiction along with the explanation for this.

This type of method has been used in the Qur'ān very frequently and

Kathīr, 3:330. However, Ṭabarī claims that this matter has become a subject of dispute among the Muslim scholars. See al-Ṭabarī, *op. cit.*, 26:40-41.

is scattered everywhere in it. This method is used by the Qur'ān in both periods, Meccan and Medinan, and in fact the first revelation given to Muḥammad was five verses of *sūrat al-ʿAlaq* which begins with an instruction²⁷.

At first, Muḥammad was asked to recite²⁸ something. In response to that he said that he was not able to recite anything, probably either because he did not know what he should recite or because he did not know how to recite. However, based on the instruction given later we understand that he did not know what he should recite and at the same time did not know how to recite it²⁹. Therefore, Gabriel read it out to him three times to make sure that he had listened to the call carefully and asked him to repeat it in the same way as Gabriel recited. According to al-Nawawī this should be the correct way to instruct the student³⁰.

In *sūrat al-Baqarah*(2):43, Muslims are instructed to perform their basic duties, such as establishing prayer, paying the poor-due (*zakāh*) and

²⁷. Though the question of the first revelation to Muhammad is a subject of dispute among Muslim scholars, all the verses for which this is claimed are included in this method. For instance, *sūrat al-ʿAlaq*, *al-Muddaththir*, *al-Fātiḥah* or *al-Basmalah*. See al-Suyūṭī, op. cit., p. 91-95.

²⁸. The word *iqra'* can be translated as either "recite" or "read". However, the term *iqra'* refers for most of the time to reading from heart i.e. reciting, whereas the term "read" means to read from something, be it *muṣḥaf* or book or anything else. In short, reciting can usually be performed by someone who has memorized something by heart.

²⁹. As for the issue of the illiteracy of Muḥammad see the discussion about it in Chapter One, 1.3. pp. 58-59 note 44.

³⁰. al-Nawawī, op. cit., 2:199.

worshipping their Lord, alone or preferably in congregation.

In *sūrat al-Aʿrāf*(7):199, Muḥammad is instructed to be forgiving, to enjoin kindness and to turn away from the ignorant.

In *sūrat al-Tawbah*:103, Muḥammad is again instructed by his Lord to take *zakāh* from a certain group of people so as to purify them, thereby allowing their wealth to grow and to pray for them since his prayer is a consolation for them. This growth (*numuw*) can be in the form of spiritual elevation through Divine reward³¹, or in the form of increase (*ziyādah*) in material wealth through investment activity³².

2.5.2. Story-Telling

This is another popular method of teaching adopted by the Qurʾān. The study of the Qurʾān brings us to the conclusion that the fountainhead of several sciences and disciplines is the Book itself, and history is one of them. Thus, in the words of Iqbal: History or, in the language of the Qurʾān, "the

³¹. Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 3:478.

³². For details see Abū ʿUbayd al-Qāsim b. Sallām, *Kitāb al-Amwāl*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1986), pp. 454-5; Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Umm*, (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿrifah, n.d.), p. 28; Nicolas P. Aghnides, *Mohammedan Theories of Finance*, (Columbia: Columbia University, 1916); Joseph Schacht, *Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1950), p. 143.

days of God" (*ayyām Allāh*)³³, is the third source of human knowledge according to the Qur'ān. It is one of the most essential teachings of the Qur'ān that nations are collectively judged, and suffer for their misdeeds here and now. In order to establish this proposition the Qur'ān constantly cites historical instances, and urges upon the reader to reflect on the past and present experience of mankind³⁴.

We find that the Qur'ān uses this type of teaching method almost everywhere. We can even say that stories of the previous peoples and nations occupy a major portion of the contents of the Qur'ān³⁵, for example the stories about Ādam³⁶, Nūḥ³⁷, Ibrāhīm³⁸ and his son, Ismā'īl³⁹, Yūsuf⁴⁰,

³³. It means to recall the Divine favours given to the bygone generations. al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., 13:182. Explaining this, Shāh Walī Allāh says that it is an explanation of the occasions which God almighty granted as a favour to those who are obedient and punishment to those who are disobedient, Shāh Walī Allāh Aḥmad b. 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Dahlawī, *al-Fawz al-Kabīr fī Uṣūl al-Tafsīr*, (Karachi: Nūr Muḥammad Karkhāneye Tijārate Kutub, 1960), p. 2. See also Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 2:574.

³⁴. Khan Zaman Mirza, "The Qur'anic Concept of History", *HI*, Vol. 13, No. 2, p. 14. See also al-Baḥiyy al-Khawaliyy, *Panduan Para Pendakwah*, (tr.) Ismail Muhammad Hasan, (Kuala Terengganu: Yayasan Islam Terengganu, 1984), pp. 487 and 613.

³⁵. According to Ghazali Basri, "Sains Sosial (Penekanan kepada bidang Sejarah) Menurut Pandangan Islam", *JPI*, Sept., 1985, p. 65, there are about one thousand verses of the Qur'ān which deal with historical events.

³⁶. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):29-38 etc.

³⁷. *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān* (3): 24, *al-Nisā'*(4):163, *al-An'ām* (6):84 etc.

³⁸. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):260, *al-An'ām*(6):74, *al-Anbiyā'* (21):52-68.

³⁹. *Sūrat Ibrāhīm* (14):37-38 etc.

⁴⁰. *Sūrat Yūsuf* (12):3-104.

Mūsā⁴¹, Sulaymān⁴² and ʿĪsā⁴³. Many other figures and great people are also mentioned. Some of them are mentioned as examples of good characters and their deeds are expected to be a model for people, while some others are mentioned as representing the evils of their nations. Muslims have to take these as lessons in their life. To show that the happenings in the stories of the Qurʾān are important for the life of present and future mankind, God describes all the events as His days. The purpose of telling stories in the Qurʾān is not only to teach us about the history of bygone nations, but also to give correct accounts of historical events. For example, the distorted version of the Bible considers Jesus to be the son of God. To correct this mistake, sūrat Āl ʿImrān (3):59 was revealed. Likewise the idea that Jesus was crucified is emphatically refuted by the verses in *al-Nisāʾ* (4):157-158⁴⁴.

Some of the above-mentioned prophets and messengers of God are mentioned in the Qurʾān along with their followers while some are mentioned without their followers, stating therein their roles to preach the religion revealed to them by their Lord. Their most important duty was to save people from destruction or from falling into hardships, be it in this world or in the life of the hereafter. In following this course they were facing a great deal of

⁴¹. *Surāt al-Qaṣaṣ* (28):3-43, *Ṭāhā* (20):9-10 etc.

⁴². *Sūrat al-Naml* (27):15-44, *Sabaʾ* (34): 12-14.

⁴³. *Sūrat Maryam* (19):16-24, *Āl ʿImrān* (3):45-60.

⁴⁴. Mirza, op. cit., p. 23.

opposition and hardship⁴⁵, for their people in the beginning, showed doubt and enmity towards their teachings. They took all the pain in guiding their nations to the path of God⁴⁶, and some of them were subjected to tortures and persecution⁴⁷ at their hands. They never failed to persuade them to believe in their *da'wah* with the utmost care and good manners. Their ever lasting weapon in facing all these atrocities, hardships and antagonisms was to hold strong to patience and never feel obliged to leave them alone. The Prophet Muḥammad whom the hadith describes as a teacher (*mu'allim*), felt very worried at one stage of his mission because of the negative responses of the people of Mecca. The term *bākhī* in *sūrat al-Kahf* (18):6 referring to this psychological distress may be understood to mean self-destruction. However, this understanding seems too extreme; commenting on the term, al-Zamakhsharī mentions that the feelings of the Prophet could be held in similitude to those of a man who had lost the company of his relatives whom he loved. Further, in *sūrat al-Tawbah* (9:128), the Prophet is described as "ardently anxious over the believers"⁴⁸.

⁴⁵. See for examples warnings and advice from God to them in *sūrat al-Nisā'* (4):104 which we read in *takūnū ta'lamūn...* and in *Āl 'Imrān* (3):140, in *yamsaskum qarḥ....*

⁴⁶. Muḥammad Aḥmad Jād al-Mawlā et. al., *Qaṣaṣ al-Qur'ān*, (Cairo: Dār al-Turāth, 1984), introductory page.

⁴⁷. The most outstanding example of these persecutions is the atrocity which befell the Prophet Yaḥyā (John the Baptist). He was imprisoned by Herod, the governor of Palestine (at that time he was a provincial ruler under the Roman Empire), whom he had reproved for the latter's sins and was eventually beheaded, for Yaḥyā kept fast hold of God's revelation with all his might, at the instigation of Herod's loved cousin, with whom he was infatuated. See al-Qur'ān *sūrat Maryam* (19):12-13; al-Mawlā et. al., *ibid.*, pp. 242-243; See also Ali, A.Y., *op. cit.*, pp. 769-770.

⁴⁸. See 'Abdullāh, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-171.

As far as the prophets are concerned all of them conveyed the same basic message that there is no god except God and thus no deity worthy to be worshipped save Him. The same message (*risālah*) was given to the previous prophets of God⁴⁹. To Him alone people are to bow and prostrate. No one is allowed to associate anything with Him or to compare anything with Him. Whoever does good deeds will be rewarded and whoever does evil will be punished, save those who repent. Thus, man's belief in God will create in him a consciousness to direct his life in order to fulfil his responsibilities, assigned to him in his capacity as the vicegerent of God (*khalīfat Allāh*) on this earth⁵⁰.

In general, their teachings are the same; that the struggle between the good (faithful) and the bad (disbelievers) will end up with the good prevailing and the evil losing, if not in this world, than certainly in the hereafter. Strong belief in God and His power over His creation is the essence of the prophetic teachings and therefore, people should take this into account before actions. Otherwise, they will fall into the snare of worldly temptations which surrounds them and they will lose their life and their belief.

There is no discrimination between His slaves in the eyes of God, no matter how big and strong one is in this worldly life. Therefore, in matters related to reward and punishment, the Qur'ān tells us many stories about the

⁴⁹. *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān* (3):64.

⁵⁰. Mirza, op. cit., p. 12.

past people, prophets and their followers, kings and slaves, fathers and sons, brothers and sisters, teachers and disciples, nations, tribes and clans and many others, for us to ponder over their actions and their consequences at the end of their life, be they positive or negative, so as to derive lessons from them.

It has been agreed that Islamic education aims at educating the heart or feeling (*dhawq* and *wijdān*). The result it seeks is changes in one's actions, behaviour and characteristics relating to his or her daily life. Thus, the heart becomes the target of Islamic education⁵¹. However, this aim is achieved through various methods. We see, in the Qur'ān, that these methods of teaching are proclaimed time and again everywhere. All of them are still in circulation.

Even to explain things which are rather abstract, God selects things that are tangible to represent His orders, ideas and instructions. For instance, in describing the volume of power He possesses and how authoritative He is in making decisions, which is very abstract and unthinkable, He mentions neither theoretical measures nor specific degrees of power which might lead people into confusion in understanding. Instead, He explains all this by mentioning his artifacts and creations as a result of his might, strength and greatness. We can see His power by observing the nature of oceans, mountains, sun, moon,

⁵¹. *Qulūb* or heart is the target of the educational process in Islam. It is clearly mentioned by *sūrat al-Anfāl* (8):2. that the (true) believers are those who, when God is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts.

flowers and trees⁵². Any one who does not believe in His infinite might and endless power is challenged to produce a similar small creation of Him. To create even a fly or a small gnat⁵³ with all its characteristics and peculiarities, for instance, is something impossible. To produce verses of the Qur'ān with similar great significance and specialities, be it comparable with the whole Qur'ān⁵⁴, or lesser amount than that, ten *surahs*⁵⁵ or even one *sūrah*⁵⁶ is another challenge which shows man's weakness, and he cannot afford to accept it.

In explaining the nature of death God uses daily life and happenings as examples. Men are required to observe and should come up with certain conclusions upon their observation. They have no ability to go beyond that point and any further attempt in that direction would only confuse and disturb them. The nature and attributes of the human being, such as patience, anger, love of property, selfishness, need for sexual fulfillment and the like are pieces of evidence of His concealed power over them. Thus the Qur'ān is rather a book of nature than of philosophy. It relates existing things and realities. It explains aspects of the practical life of the human being. Every

⁵². *Sūrat al-Naḥl* (16):14, *Ibrāhīm* (14):32, *al-Ghāshiyah* (17- 20), *Yūnus* (10):5, *Yāsīn* (32):39.

⁵³. *Sūrat al-Ḥajj*(22):73.

⁵⁴. *Sūrat al-Isrā'*(17):88.

⁵⁵. *Sūrat Hūd*(11):13.

⁵⁶. *Sūrat Yūnus*(10):38 and *sūrat al-Baqarah*(2):23.

human movement will reveal the degree of His power which is hidden in them. Thus the story is a very important tool in educating people.

The verses of the Qur'ān comprise many aspects. As noted above, the verses which tell a story constitute one of the largest portions. They bring people down to ground and back to the reality of life. What happened in the past could take place again in the future of a human life. Of course the time and pattern might be different but the essence of the happening would be the same, for it has a similarity in its causality, actors, action and behaviour, thought and understanding, attitudes and moral standards. For instance, during the time of Mūsā, Fir'awn (Pharoah) tortured him because he was afraid that Mūsā would topple him, while during the Prophet Muḥammad's time Abū Lahab was one of the oppressors, since the later feared that Muḥammad's mission would endanger his control over the people. This situation will recur till the last day as there will always be people who belong to the categories of the oppressed and the oppressor⁵⁷.

People are fond of goodness, joy and happiness and love those who do good, while they hate a bad man or woman. They struggle to obtain worldly happiness⁵⁸ and various forms of wealth represented by property and

⁵⁷. *Sūrat al-Qaṣaṣ* (28):3-50; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 3:418; See also 'Alī Khalīl Abū al-°Aynayn, *Falsafat al-Tarbiyah al-Islāmiyyah fī al-Qur'ān al-Karīm*, (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-°Arabī, 1980), p. 236.

⁵⁸. al-Ṭabarī makes it clear that the word *al-khayr* in *sūrat al-°Ādiyāt*(100):8 is worldly and mundane happiness (*al-khayr al-dunyā*). al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., 30:279.

horses⁵⁹. Sometimes they pay no heed to the principles and bases of societal life, which will, at the end of the day, lead to their downfall for they are greatly tempted by its individual elements. These can be in the forms of family temptation, influence of wives and offspring, or stored-up heaps of gold and silver, or horses branded (with their mark), or cattle or land⁶⁰. All these things would be lawful only if consumed in a good manner and for the sake of goodness, and not in the way of ill-feeling to others⁶¹.

It is the nature of man to love to listen to good stories and tales of heroes⁶². A good narrator can cause a man to become curious and pay heed to the plot of the story. When one's heart is touched by any idea in the story then it might be one of the changing factors in one's life.

This method of teaching is frequently utilized and very popular indeed in the Qur'ān. God has reminded his Prophet Muḥammad time and again about its importance. Sometimes it is followed by the fruits and virtues of that reminder such as in *sūrat Hūd*(11):120⁶³, and *al-Kahf*(18):13⁶⁴. On other

⁵⁹. Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 4:576

⁶⁰. *Surāt Āl 'Imrān*(3):14

⁶¹. Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr*, 1:376-377

⁶². 'Abd al-ʿAzīz and 'Abd al-Majīd, op. cit., 1:247.

⁶³. We read "All that we relate to thee of the stories of the apostles, with it We make firm thy heart..."

⁶⁴. We read "We relate to thee their story in truth: they were youths who believed in their Lord, and We advanced them in guidance"

occasions the virtues are not immediately mentioned. It is up to someone to find them somewhere else, such as in *sūrat Yūsuf*(12):3⁶⁵ and *Ṭāhā*(20):99⁶⁶. To go deeper into this discussion, it is worth analysing one or two stories in the Qur'ān in detail.

In the story of the Prophet Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, the Qur'ān portrays to us the strong belief of a prophet-king in his God. The story starts by depicting the background of Solomon and his kingdom which had been previously governed by his father David. He had bestowed on him bounties, virtues and advantages in his life which helped him to run his kingdom smoothly. Things such as an ability to understand and communicate with animals was a great blessing, and he thus drew his strength from all sort of God's creatures, including genies and birds. Though he was granted such a miraculous position, he was humble before God and always referred to these bounties as His blessing.

This is followed by an occasion which shows that he was a very sharp observer. One day he found that one of his subjects, the hoopoe (*hudhud*), was absent in the parade. He was very angry, for it showed its disloyalty to him. Upon its return it brought the news that a queen of an unknown country lived

⁶⁵. We read " We do relate unto thee the most beautiful of stories, in that We reveal to thee this (portion of the) Qur'ān..."

⁶⁶. We read "Thus do We relate to thee some stories of what happened before, for We have sent thee a message from Our own presence."

in a very ungodly manner. Upon hearing this he sent a message which advised the Queen to correct her belief, but in return she tried to calm him down with presents and gifts of precious things. However, Solomon returned all the presents and instead threatened her with an invasion. Upon this, she became sure that Solomon was not searching for worldly popularity but had a specific message. Therefore, she was obliged to obey him⁶⁷.

The Qur'ān reveals to us the bases and elements of a sound and strong government. The elements are as follows; knowledge and power, the ultimate aim of government, the leader's strong powers of observation, alertness and caution and lastly good and obedient subjects.

A strong government must stand on two strong pillars; knowledge⁶⁸ and power⁶⁹. Power means all-embracing power that consists of physical strength, military power, weapons and armaments and other facilities⁷⁰. Likewise, knowledge is a reservoir from which flow all sorts of guidance and rules that lead people towards victory⁷¹. It is a light that holds them firm on

⁶⁷. For the detail of the story see *sūrat al-Naml*(27):15-44.

⁶⁸. *Sūrat al-Zumar* (39):9.

⁶⁹. *Sūrat al-Raḥmān* (55):33.

⁷⁰. *Sūrat al-Anfāl* (8):60.

⁷¹. In the case of the Prophet Solomon, he had among his advisers an *ʿālim* who achieved such a status that he could look into the knowledge (*kitāb*) of his God. Ibn Kathīr holds the idea that he was the scribe of Solomon who knew the *Ism aʿẓam*. See al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., 19:162; Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 3:400-401.

the correct path and will not be derailed from it. The Qur'ān calls it *baṣṭah fi al-ilm wa al-jism*⁷². Secondly, any good government must have aims and objectives to be achieved or a message to be adopted by the people. The aim must be for the welfare of the people based on strong belief in God⁷³. That must be the ultimate aim of a sound and strong government to establish a government which follows the laws of God. Thus it would enjoin the good and prohibit the evil⁷⁴. Thirdly, this story demonstrates the caution and sharp observation of a good leader. Solomon has been portrayed as having been interested in everything to the extent that he managed to observe the absence of a bird among his huge number of subjects, such that he took care of that smallest thing much more than any great thing or issue. To him even the smallest creature of God can contribute to the welfare of the state. The fourth that is the combination of a good leader and good subjects will produce good government. If there is always rebellion from the subjects the government will not be stable economically and politically, and they will be lost in quarrels or civil wars amongst themselves⁷⁵, so that nothing fruitful could be produced.

⁷². *Sūrat al-Baqarah*(2): 247.

⁷³. *Surat al-Baqarah* (2): 193 and *al-Anfāl*(8):39.

⁷⁴. *Surat Āl 'Imrān* (3):110.

⁷⁵. Once 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was asked by one of his subjects about the factors that led to the instability of his government and the misfortune that befell him which had not happened during the reign of 'Umar the second caliph. He said that the root of the problem was the evil hearts of the people during his time which was not found during the reign of 'Umar. "When 'Umar was ruling the empire, he had the privilege of having citizens like me, but now I am very unfortunate to have citizens like you" was his reply to the question. In other word 'Alī was saying that he was unfortunate because the people during his time were not as good as in the time of 'Umar in their *akhlaq*. See Syed Uthman al-Habshi, "Good followers make an effective leader" *New Straits Times*, Saturday, April 15, 1995. See also al-Khawaliyy, op. cit., p. 76-77.

Other than that, the Qur'ān also would like to reveal to us that invasion, colonialism and encroachment into other people's territory by the winning party⁷⁶ will only cause dismay, humiliation and damage as well as total destruction to their civilization. This is the well-known implication of any war. It is nicely portrayed by the Qur'ān in a very short but all-embracing verse of *sūrat al-Naml* (27):34⁷⁷. In the case of the Queen, she was correct when she obeyed the order from Solomon. The most powerful attitude of a great leader is to be frank to any leader with whom he cannot compete. Usually the ungodly leaders are normally corrupt. They are not interested in solving the problems of their people, instead they leave the matter to the discretion of the ruler. This point has been mentioned by *sūrat al-Naml*(27):33⁷⁸.

In *sūrat Yūsuf*⁷⁹, a *surah* which is dedicated to the Prophet Yūsuf, one can learn that there will always be a problem in life in relations between the sexes if they are not dealt with properly. Temptation, seduction and trials can happen at any time especially if one or both are tempted by the outward appearance⁸⁰. It will be even more fatal if a woman has the upper hand over

⁷⁶. al-Ṭabarī in interpreting the words *idhā dakhālū qaryatan* says that it means 'anwatan wa ghalabatan which means violently and (in the state of) victory. al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., 19:154.

⁷⁷. We read, "Kings, when they enter a country, despoil it, and make the noblest of its people its meanest" and God endorses this as saying "*wa kadhālik yaf'alūn*" which means and thus do they behave. al-Ṭabarī, ibid.

⁷⁸. Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 3:399.

⁷⁹. Especially in verses 3-104 of the *sūrah* (12).

⁸⁰. *Yūsuf* (12):23

a man who has no principles of his own. In this case, he will be an easy prey to her mischief and temptation⁸¹. This is the very essence of the story of Yūsuf, but he, with the grace of God, managed to escape from all temptations that darkened his life⁸².

Problems do not only arise among opposite sexes and from outward appearances, even relationships between brothers, especially from different mothers, are sometimes in jeopardy. In the case of Yūsuf and his brother Binyāmīn, they were deprived of their childhood happiness by their consanguine brothers who were jealous of their father's inclinations and love towards them⁸³. In this type of relationship jealousy will always overpower the intellect.

In the case of Yūsuf the jealousy appeared from his older brothers who were from a different mother. Due to this jealousy, Yūsuf had been subjected to maltreatment. But God showed His mercy and love to him. Thus, he became an official in the Egyptian government's treasury⁸⁴.

Just before his appointment he demonstrated a different kind of skill

⁸¹. *Yūsuf* (12):25.

⁸². *Yūsuf* (12):53.

⁸³. Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 2:514.

⁸⁴. *Yūsuf* (12):55-56.

that was well-acceptable in his society. He was able to interpret the meanings of the king's dream about seven fat and lean cattle and seven green and dry ears of corn⁸⁵.

In *Sūrat al-Kahf* (18):60-82, the Qur'ān sketches the story of the prophet Mūsā and a wise man from whom he wanted to learn. Eventually however he failed in this due to his failure to heed the man's warning over some of his ways of behaviour. Here, the Qur'ān tells us that patience is one of the very basic elements in the life of a student⁸⁶.

In the same *sūrah* verses 9-22, the Qur'ān tells us the story of a group of young men (*fityah*) who believed in God and ignored the masses' belief in His associates. They sought blessing (*rahmah*) and guidance (*rashād* and *hudā*) from God and ultimately He not only gave them what they had asked for but increased His guidance to them.

The idea here is that had they failed to observe their faith in God, they would have never had blessing and divine guidance bestowed on them.

⁸⁵. *Yūsuf* (12):47-49.

⁸⁶. Scholars have emphasized this point in their writings; for instance, it is said that al-Shāfi'ī has mentioned patience as one of the six qualities students should have in pursuing knowledge. See al-Zarnūjī, op. cit., p. 103; al-Namarī al-Qurṭubī, op. cit., p.107; Badr al-Dīn Abū al-Faḍl Sa'd Allāh Ibn Jamā'ah al-Kinānī, *Tadhkirat al-Sāmi' wa al-Mutakallim fī Adab al-ʿĀlim wa al-Muta'allim*, (ed.) Sayyid Muḥammad Hāshim al-Nadawī, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, n.d.), p. 27.

As usual, the stories ended with the good characters prevailing. The same thing happens in other stories such as those of the Banū Isrā'īl, and the nations of 'Ād, Thamūd and the like.

Some people might argue that the stories in the *Qur'an* have less value since there are many repetitions in their occurrence there and in the way they are related. Actually the repetition and recurrence of the same facts in a different manner in several *sūrahs* has some importance. Here repetition is accompanied by some variations, and this fact has a significant relevance for education⁸⁷. Repetition accompanied with new illustrations or ideas is more productive than mere repetition which is likely to be boring⁸⁸ to the reader. The stories and their repetitions provided Muḥammad with psychological reinforcement and endurance in his struggle against the non-believers because it promised him that not even a single opponent of the prophets would be successful in their struggle, because the good will at last prevail and the bad will lose. Thus, the technique of repetition is important in implanting information and strengthening the ideas in the listener's mind⁸⁹.

The Banū Isrā'īl for instance, occupy a very large part of the historical events in the Qur'ān. The stories of this nation are mentioned in many places

⁸⁷. 'Abdullāh, op. cit., p.180.

⁸⁸. *ibid.*

⁸⁹. Abū al-ʿAynayn, op. cit., p. 235.

there in addition to a *sūrah* which is dedicated exclusively to them. Mūsā was one of the prophets sent to this nation. A particularly interesting story involving Mūsā and the Banū Isrā'īl concerns his efforts to save them from the oppression of Fir'awn the tyrant king of Egypt at that time.

Personal glorification is not the central theme in the Qur'anic stories. The most important message, as we have mentioned, is the struggle between good and evil which results in the defeat of the latter⁹⁰. Despite being mentioned by the Qur'an many times there are many cases where the actual identity of individuals and nations are not revealed. For instance, the identities of Fir'awn⁹¹, al-'Azīz⁹² the governor of Egypt and the adoptive father of Yūsuf and his wife⁹³ who tempted Yūsuf remain not fully identified. The identification of the knowledgeable man whose disciple Mūsā would have liked to be also remains secret⁹⁴. This is because the presentation of the stories in the Qur'ān is not at all to reveal personal identities but situations or events by which we can distinguish the truth from falsehood⁹⁵.

⁹⁰. 'Abdullāh, op. cit., p. 176.

⁹¹. *Sūrat al-Muzzammil* (73):15.

⁹². *Sūrat Yūsuf* (12):30.

⁹³. *Sūrat Yūsuf* (12):21 and 23-32.

⁹⁴. *Sūrat al-Kahf* (18):65.

⁹⁵. Mirza, op. cit., p. 12.

2.5.3. Questions and Answers

Questions and answers are used in many places in the Qur'ān. This method, whether in response to questions put to the messenger Muḥammad⁹⁶ or to statements⁹⁷, is either in the form of a challenge⁹⁸ or clarification⁹⁹ or reinforcement¹⁰⁰ of any statement mentioned in the Qur'ān. We have many examples of this type of method in the Qur'ān. For example, there is a dialogue between God and the angels on the purpose of creating Ādam. The angels protested that the appointment of Ādam as the *khalīfah* on earth might lead to the destruction of the entire world for they feared that he would destroy and cause damage to other creations. If this were the case, it might defeat the purpose of their glorifying Him because in some other part of the universe the *khalīfah* was committing crimes by destroying and killing. However, the dissatisfaction was removed when they were unable to respond to the questions put by God, while the *khalīfah* did respond and answered the questions. Thereafter God reinforced his challenge by saying, "I know what you know not"¹⁰¹.

⁹⁶. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):189 and 222.

⁹⁷. *Sūrat al-Qalam* (68):1-2 and 52.

⁹⁸. *Sūrat Hūd* (11):13.

⁹⁹. Second portion of *sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):189 and 222.

¹⁰⁰. *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān* (3):144, *al-Kahf* (18):110, *al-Aḥzāb* (33):40.

¹⁰¹. *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):30.

Likewise, in the case of prostration before Ādam where Iblīs is portrayed as having refused to obey the commandment of God. When he was questioned for the reason of his disobedience, he bluntly answered that his status was higher than Ādam for he was created from fire while Ādam was created from clay¹⁰².

The question and answer between God and Ibrāhīm takes place in *sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):260 where the latter insisted on seeing how his Lord gives life to the dead. The issue here is not that he had doubt in his Lord but he wanted to get a clear picture about the power of God so that he would be satisfied and live with it¹⁰³. In *sūrat al-Anbiyā'* (21):52-56, there was a dialogue between him and his people about the reason why he abstained from worshipping idols. He wished all his people to emulate him in not worshipping them, for the idols can neither speak nor respond to their supplications, and as such they could neither be of any good to them nor do them harm.

2.5.4. Metaphor

Among the methods of teaching in the Qur'ān is giving similitudes and metaphors. In *sūrat al-Rūm* (30):58 we read, "Verily We have given for mankind in the Qur'ān all kinds of similitudes". We read the same in *sūrat al-Zumar* (39):27. Allah mentions clearly that he gives so much attention to these

¹⁰². See *sūrat al-A'raf* (7):12.

¹⁰³. Quṭb, op. cit., 1:302.

kinds of similitudes and metaphors in order that people would ponder over the creation of all His creatures. In this way, it is hoped that man would arrive at the conclusion that he came to this world for a message to be a vicegerent of God and thus he must be obedient to Him and not for something which is of no avail¹⁰⁴.

In *sūrat al-ʿAnkabūt* (29):41-43, God makes a similitude for those who make partners to Him in His guardianship of the spider which takes its web as a house, for it is very flimsy and would be damaged at any time. In *sūrat Ibrāhīm* (14):18, God likens the works of infidels to ashes which would be blown away by the wind at any time. In *sūrat al-Baqarah* (2):261-265, God pictures the good and praiseworthy deeds as being similar to a grain of corn which produces seven ears each having one hundred grains. In this way God urges people to work and spend their wealth and time in the cause of God, so that their spendings and disbursement would not be of no avail. All would be given their due and reward.

In order to inculcate certain ideas into the people's mind we find that God always make thing easy, by bringing the similitude right before people's eyes. The likenesses and similarities take the form of tangible objects. This is

¹⁰⁴. God says in *sūrat Āl ʿImrān* (3):191, that men of understanding (*ulū al-albāb*) are convinced by the signs of the greatness of God. After having contemplated the wonders of creation in the heavens and the earth, they have in their thought that God did not create all this wonderful creation for nothing (*bāṭilan*).

simply because people tend to give excuses and they normally find it difficult to accept and understand messages which are theoretical and philosophical in nature. Only people of knowledge can accept theories and illustrations. Yet God proclaims that people still keep on questioning these similitudes and metaphors and consider them as something meaningless¹⁰⁵.

2.5.5. Demonstration

Demonstration is another method introduced by the Qur'ān. It is actually a non-verbal method of teaching. Though few examples can be found in the Qur'ān it is quite significant because from the very first day of man's life this method has been introduced to people. Moreover, it causes people not only to use their minds to solve the problems they face but also to find help in using tools and equipment. In other words it shows us the importance of vocational and practical subjects in human life. People have to develop their skills in many fields. Otherwise, they will not achieve satisfaction in their life, problems will not be solved and above all technical know-how will be halted. If this is the case, how then will people explore the creations of God which are still unknown to them. Indeed people cannot venture into space without knowledge. It is clearly mentioned in *sūrat al-Raḥmān* (55):33, that only those who possess proofs and evidence in knowledge and technical know-how¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵. We read in *sūrat al-Muddaththir* (74):31, "What meaneth Allah by these similitudes?"

¹⁰⁶. Seclusion with knowledge and *ʿamal* is considered a clear proof (*ḥujjah bayyinah*) or a *ṣulṭān*. Muḥyī al-Dīn b. ʿArabī, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm*, (ed.) Muṣṭafā Ghālib, (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, n.d.), 2:575.

can explore the secrets of the world outside the earth¹⁰⁷.

The most outstanding example in this particular respect is the case of two sons of Ādam who quarrelled over the acceptance of their sacrifices. When Hābīl was murdered, his brother Qābīl did not know what to do with his corpse. He felt relieved after the corpse of his brother was buried after emulating the action of a raven which had killed its rival. The raven showed him how to put the corpse in a hole and cover it¹⁰⁸.

Ibn ʿAbbās is said to have had difficulty in understanding the word "*fāṭir*" in the Qurʾān. He was made to understand the meaning only after overhearing its use by two bedouins who were quarrelling over a well. One of them happened to say "*ana faṭartuhā*"¹⁰⁹. From this came the word *fāṭir* which means creating or originating a thing.

This visual demonstration would thus be significant in teaching subjects that can be better understood through actions and practices. Vocational skills are very much relevant to this method.

¹⁰⁷. al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., 27:137.

¹⁰⁸. See *sūrat al-Mā'idah* (5):31. See also ʿAbdullāh, op. cit., p. 185.

¹⁰⁹. Arthur Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qurʾān*, (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1938), p. 7.

2.5.6. Reflection and Travel

This method of teaching is closely related to the method of metaphors, for both of them require people to ponder over the creations of God and to reflect on His signs.

As I have mentioned before¹¹⁰, it was Muḥammad's own Companions and disciples who followed in their master's footsteps as educators. The method of teaching enunciated by the Prophet remained unchanged in the time of the Companions. They practised the method which they inherited from their master. They taught the new faith, its dogmas and its duties as he did. In order to materialize this they travelled far and wide in search of communities to instruct in the new religion and its practices including reading from the Book¹¹¹. Thus whenever a new province was conquered, teachers were promptly dispatched to instruct its people¹¹². Likewise, searchers after knowledge (*ṭālib al-ʿilm*) also undertook journeys in order to receive knowledge from various authorities.

Many verses of the Qurʾān urge people to make journeys. The aim of the journey is to reflect upon the greatness of the Creator through the nature of things or the ruins of buildings and places. In *sūrat Muḥammad* (47):10, the

¹¹⁰. Refer to Chapter One, 1.4., especially the last paragraph.

¹¹¹. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, op. cit., 1:185

¹¹². *ibid.*

Qur'ān urges people to take journeys so that they can ponder over the ruins and the end of those before them who did evil. Punishments and destructions inflicted upon them should contribute to the feeling of the weakness of the human being against the greatness of God. Thus men should give full submission to the will of God and not do any evil thing for all this would contribute to the destruction of human life and the world alike. The same thing was repeated in *sūrat al-Rūm* (30):42, *Fāṭir* (35):44, and *Ghāfir* (40):21 and 82. Mūsā was portrayed as having made such a long journey in order to learn something from a man who was said to have been more knowledgeable than him¹¹³.

In the history of Islamic education we find many instances where students and scholars made long journeys in order to learn or to listen to knowledge from the mouths of authoritative scholars¹¹⁴. Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh bought a camel and went to Shām to listen and receive a hadith on the authority of ʿAbd Allāh b. Anas al-Anṣārī¹¹⁵. There was an occasion where one who came from near China spoke to one who came from Spain in the

¹¹³. *Sūrat al-Kahf* (18):60-82.

¹¹⁴. Though they had known the hadith or the knowledge before their journeys. Some of them overtook the journeys to confirm the sources of a single hadith or item of knowledge they had learnt. For example the case of Jābir b. ʿAbd Allāh.

¹¹⁵. Jābir knew the hadith before he made his travel and indeed his travel was just to confirm its source or the authority. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, op. cit., 1:208-210; al-Namarī al-Qurṭubī, op. cit., 1:93.

linguistic class held by Ibn al-ʿArabī in the second century A.H.¹¹⁶.

Various suggestions and advices to men to think and ponder over God's signs and power convey the ideas of a teaching methodology which suggests the use of the senses in addition to verbal symbolism¹¹⁷. It gives us room to use observation and the senses.

2.5.7. Experiment.

This method is linked with the ability of trying to do things or taking the risk of committing error. Throughout the history of the Prophet Muḥammad, we find that in the course of educating his *ummah*, he had undergone and faced all kinds of traumas, plights and difficulties right from the very beginning of his call (*daʿwah*) to the proclamation of the oneness of God¹¹⁸. According to the teaching of the Qur'ān he, apart from being guided directly by his Lord, at times was left to make decisions on his own. Sometimes he made his own commitment to any problem or issue pertaining to the life of human beings. In this respect he was actually given the power to act as a legislator or a law giver¹¹⁹. Some other times he was made to consult

¹¹⁶. al-Abrāshī, op. cit., p. 187.

¹¹⁷. *Sūrat Muḥammad* (47):10.

¹¹⁸. He was even opposed by his own family. The most outspoken among them was his uncle Abū Lahab.

¹¹⁹. Muhammad Muṣṭafā Azamī, *Studies in Hadith Methodology and Literature*, (Indianapolis: Islamic Teaching Centre, 1977), p. 5. Idem, *On Schacht's Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence*, (Riyadh: King Saud University, 1985), pp. 13-14.

his aides and companions, especially in matters related to the welfare of the society. This is the point where people are to see the importance of *shūrā* and on top of that to utilise the freedom of applying intellectual striving (*ijtihād*). As a man Muḥammad was not exempted in this respect. He, at times, was criticised by his Lord for not taking a correct decision, but, right after his declaration to his companions and his admission of making an error, was corrected by Him. This shows that carefulness in taking a decision is important. The *shūrā* is important also. Further, as a human being he was subject to errors and faults in his decisions. The status of being protected from committing mistakes (*maʿṣūm*) does not mean that he did not make any mistakes at all but rather, if he had done so, he would have been corrected right after the occasion. Thus, the method of making experiments or having trial and error in teaching is deduced from this idea. However, the idea of having a supervisor or a mentor who is competent in guiding the researcher is essential in the sense that the latter would not go astray in his research while he is given freedom to undertake the experiment on his own initiative. The students should be given methods and procedures before they are left to do the experiment. In the case of Muḥammad he was corrected after showing restlessness when he was questioned and interrupted by a blind man while he was approaching the elite of his people¹²⁰. He was also criticised when he agreed with the majority of his companions to take the Meccans as prisoners

¹²⁰. *Sūrat ʿAbasa* (81):1-12.

and forwent the opinion of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb¹²¹. In another case he was corrected for making illegal certain foods following his wives’ desires¹²². All these are to show that people especially scholars and teachers are encouraged to undertake research and experiment and to develop this method in their teaching sessions, so that their students become well-versed and conversant in their field.

2.6. Practices and Customs

Islamic educational books devote a great deal of time to portraying the general methodology of teaching which has been used by Muslim educators. The most popular methods of teaching are the following:

2.6.1. Delivery (*ilqā’iyyah*)¹²³

This type of method is explained as the way the teacher uses his voice. Most of the time the teacher is the actor, who speaks while the students listen to him. The information comes from the teacher and he is perceived to be the authority on the subject matter so that obscurities can only be explained by him. The method can take place at any occasion and stage, especially at the lower level where children need much help from teachers. It comprises some other sub-methods as follows:

¹²¹. *Sūrat al-Anfāl* (8):68.

¹²². *Sūrat al-Taḥrīm* (66):1.

¹²³. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and ‘Abd al-Majīd, op. cit., p. 245.

i- Lecture (*muḥāḍarah*)

This method of teaching is the most common among many others. It should be distinguished from any other verbal method because it is solely related to the verbal presentation, without discussion or participation by students. The latter are expected to listen, understand and jot down notes, if any. Questions are not allowed during the teacher's presentation¹²⁴. Teachers are expected to prepare their notes for discussion. A teacher who is going to give a lecture to his students must be well-grounded in the subject, competent in it and well-versed. He is not expected to read throughout his notes, instead he has to deliver an impromptu lecture¹²⁵. A teacher usually starts his class by mentioning the outlines of a specific topic of the day when he mentions to them the main ideas of the discussion and its conclusion. Later on he elucidates the main ideas that had been introduced at the beginning of the lecture. Students are to listen and write down whatever ideas they have grasped during the lecture. Later they will complete the lesson with their own reading from other sources¹²⁶.

Since the nature of this method needs full attention from every student it is not suitable for children, but only for those who can devote ample time to it. Students at institutions of higher education, university students, or any

¹²⁴. *ibid.*

¹²⁵. al-Abrāshī, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

¹²⁶. al-Shaybānī, *op. cit.*, p. 413-414.

other class that can exercise patience, understand the abstract and deduce ideas from the lecture¹²⁷ are the most suitable for this method.

Ibn Khaldūn in his *Muqaddimah* writes a great deal on this matter. In his opinion a teacher should employ three stages in his lecture. In the first stage he should give outlines and the main ideas of the subject to be lectured on. Later, it should be followed by explanation, outlines or details of the ideas or discussion of the differences and disagreements of various scholars, and other related ideas. Lastly he should explain things in more detail and further clarification must be given, especially on terms and expressions that are obscure to the students¹²⁸ .

ii- Explanation (*sharḥ*)

What is meant by explanation is elucidating and interpreting difficulties and obscurities faced by the students. Sometime students do not understand terms used by the lecturer. Words and vocabulary seem to be simple to the lecturer but they may not be to the students. On this point Ibn Khaldūn advises teachers to be very careful, as otherwise, it may cause difficulty for the students, lessen their interest in learning, and may lead them into laziness. Leaving children and students without understanding their lesson is really

¹²⁷. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and ‘Abd al-Majīd, op. cit., pp. 245-246.

¹²⁸. Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., p. 589; al-Shaybānī, op. cit., p. 414.

dangerous and is considered a wrong approach in teaching (*sū' al-ta'lim*)¹²⁹.

iii- Description (*waṣf*)

Indeed description is a part and parcel of explanation. However, things are sometimes not explainable or the explanation needs description, since otherwise it is not fully understandable. Say for instance, if a teacher explains something about the climate of a country, it may not be clear enough with description. Equally the way he describes the nature of a revolution will bring students to understand the history of the revolution better. Thus if the teacher is competent in his language, style and knowledge of each issue it will bring the situation to life and the students will be able to understand the situation as if they had been there in person¹³⁰.

iv- Story-telling (*qīṣaṣ*)

It is in the nature of mankind to love a good story and someone who does good regardless of whether he is an adult or a child¹³¹. A good storyteller can cause his listener to be curious and pay heed to the plot of the story. When one's heart is touched by any idea in the story then it could be one of the turning points in his life.

¹²⁹. Many a time the students are confused by words that have double meanings. Due to this the lecturer has to give explanations from the very root of the problem. He should take into consideration the ability of understanding of his students because their intelligence is not similar. Ibn Khaldūn, *ibid.*, p. 590.

¹³⁰. 'Abd al-ʿAzīz and 'Abd al-Majīd, *op. cit.*, 1:247.

¹³¹. *ibid.*

Thus this method of teaching is fully utilized and very popular indeed in the Qur'ān. God has reminded his Prophet Muḥammad time and again about its importance.

This method can be looked at from various viewpoints; it helps to acquire information and knowledge of realities in a pleasant and wonderful manner, and it is indeed a suitable method of teaching especially for children, because it portrays the subject vividly and fixes it in their minds.

v- Narration (*riwāyah*)

This is considered a basic part of teaching methodology. Subjects like hadith, grammar and Arabic literature were taught through this method. Later its application was extended to other subjects like fiqh, theology and others.

As for the hadith, the companions narrated whatever thing they heard reported from the Prophet, his words and actions and his confirmation or silence. Until the end of the first century of the *Hijrah*, most hadith were narrated by this method.

Due to the emergence of fabricated hadith the *muḥaddithūn* had to introduce certain principles to curb this unhealthy practice from creeping into society. These rules and regulations were later studied separately under the special heading of *ʿUlūm al-ḥadīth* or *Muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth*.

vi- Listening (*samāʿ*)

This was used especially in the early stages of Islam, since writing was not familiar to the majority of the pagan Arabs. Moreover, many were not in favour of writing in order not to confuse the words of the Qurʾān. Apart from that, Arabic had suffered from shortcomings in terms of orthography that made writing and reading difficult. In addition, materials for writing such as papyrus and parchment were difficult to obtain.

Though all the constraints were removed by the passage of time, some people were still prone to use the listening method and they preferred this method to writing. The drawback of this method is that the teacher often did not pay heed to what had been done by his students. Some of them perhaps wrote down some of the teacher's ideas but others did not. They were on the whole happy to listen to what had been uttered by their teacher¹³². Therefore, we find that there are many controversies in certain books of hadith. Every one wrote hadith according to what he heard from his *shaykh* or according to what he had memorized. The Muwaṭṭaʾ of Mālik for instance sometimes has as many as twenty two versions, in which *ikhtilāf* in wording occurs very frequently.

vii- Reading (*qirāʾah*)

¹³². Ghunaymah, op. cit., p. 183; al-Shaybānī, op. cit., pp. 422-423.

This was used to get knowledge from books rather than from one's teacher. There are three types of reading, firstly, the teacher reading from his book. Secondly, his reading from books written by others and thirdly, students reading to the teacher. The first type is more preferred. It is said that Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal used to read from his own book only. As far as the second type is concerned, it may be that the teacher might read the works of other scholars. This method has a great many pitfalls for teachers who did not memorize hadiths. This might be used by the students to test the depth of their teachers' knowledge and memory. Regarding the third type Aḥmad says that this was the most common practice from the beginning of the second century. The advantage in this method is that the teacher will be able to gauge the students' ability in copying down what he had spoken or read¹³³. The students hope that reading materials from teachers other than their *shaykh* will enable him to express his own opinion and comment. This method was used frequently, especially when *ijtihād* is said to have no longer been practised by Muslims. Most of the students had to read or memorize original writings (*matn* plural *mutūn*) or their interpretation (*sharḥ*) by previous teachers, without the provision of comments. Ibn Khaldūn condemned this method because it may lead people to be weak in thinking, non-creative and non-productive¹³⁴.

viii- Dictation (*imlā'*)

¹³³. al-Aḥmadī, op. cit., 1985), 2:339-343.

¹³⁴. Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., 4:1352.

Dictation accompanied listening. This method was observed by people especially when writing materials such as paper were easily obtained by the masses. During the medieval period of Islam, ink and paper were kept ready to take notes from the lectures delivered by professors. In a lecture hall at Nishapur, there were five hundred ink-stands kept ready for the use of students¹³⁵.

In dictation, a teacher usually used his own words. Dictation was close to *ijtihād*¹³⁶. Normally the teacher memorized texts or knew the texts by heart and could therefore, lecture without referring to any book¹³⁷. Therefore, we find that ideas in his teaching normally came from his own *ijtihād* and not from others.

The main difference between this method and the method of listening (*samāʿ*) is that in the latter the teacher often did not pay heed to what had been done by his students. His concern was to talk and the students listened to him. Whereas in dictation the teacher meticulously expressed his words and the students copied every word they listened¹³⁸.

¹³⁵. A. M. A. Shushtery, *Outlines of Islamic Culture*, (Bangalore City: The Bangalore Press, 1938), 1:169.

¹³⁶. Ghunaymah, op. cit., p. 184.

¹³⁷. Shushtery, op. cit., p. 169.

¹³⁸. ibid., p. 183. al-Shaybānī, op. cit., pp. 422-423.

Since this method was close to *ijtihād*, we find that it was abandoned when the door of *ijtihād* was proclaimed closed. It was given a new life by al-Ḥāfiz Abū al-Faḍl al-ʿIrāqī (d. 796 H)¹³⁹ and later by his student Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852 H) and al-Suyūfī (d. 873 H). Finally Shaykh Murtaḍā al-Zabīdī (d.1205 H) used this method in teaching *lughah*¹⁴⁰.

2.6.2. The inductive method (*istiqrāʾiyyah*)

The aim is to guide pupils to get to know general facts and rules through inference and induction. It starts with discussing small parts or aspects of an idea and at the end arriving at a general principle. Teachers give examples and details and mention similarities in them, from which students can identify characteristics of these particular ideas. The nature of this method of teaching means that it is good to be used in subjects such as *naḥw*, *ṣarf*, *fiqh*, mathematics, craft and physics which can be recognized through specific characteristics. It is good to train students to think over an idea or concept, and by having a lot of examples the ideas will be memorized and imprinted in students' minds and can be recalled whenever they are needed. Though the process of learning is slower, it is good for a student to be familiarized with the ideas and concepts. This will lead to the possibility of coming up with his

¹³⁹. al-Ghazālī, *Ilḥyāʾ*, in editor's introduction to Imām al-ʿIrāqī, 1:5.

¹⁴⁰. Ghunaymah, op. cit., pp. 185-186.

own idea or in other word to practising *ijtihad*¹⁴¹.

2.6.3. Comparative method (*qiyāsiyyah*) or deductive (*istinbāṭiyyah*)

This is totally different from the inductive method. It is really the reverse of this, since the inductive method uses examples to arrive at a certain conclusion, while the comparative method starts by introducing an idea or a conclusion. Principles are mentioned from the very beginning. Details are given later and are matched against the previously mentioned concepts and principles.

This method can be used in teaching subjects similar to those which are suitable to the inductive method, as it needs general rules or principles to become bases for discussion. Science and grammar are the best examples of subjects suited to this method. By this we mean that these two methods are complementary to each other since the inductive method leads students to the general principles whereas the comparative method proves the truth of the general principles¹⁴².

As noted above the method of teaching is not static. Its application relies mostly on the situation, and thus it varies from time to time, from one subject to another and from one society to another. Therefore, there are

¹⁴¹. See the analysis on its application at *pondok* in Chapter Five, 5.3., p. 268.

¹⁴². al-Shaybānī, op. cit., p. 413.

scholars who try to combine these two methods and name the result the "method of combination" (*jam'iiyyah*)¹⁴³.

2.6.4. Dialogue, Discussion and Disputation (*ḥiwār wa munāẓarah*)

Dialogue is used to reach a certain idea which is very hard to reject. Usually it goes through a series of discussions, dialogues, questions and answers until it arrives at a fact which allows no room for doubt and criticism.

Dialogue can usually be said to go through three consecutive phases:

i. A belief which has no basis.

The role of the proponent is to show the ignorance of his opponent by stating that his arrogance and pride in his ability have no basis. His acceptance of and belief in the idea is illogical and unacceptable.

ii. The opponent is in doubt and his position is vulnerable to attack.

This is shown by the inconsistency of his arguments.

iii. The debater has to exploit this vulnerability of his opponent by asking him to follow his discussion and ideas and without brooking any delay or allowing him to feel ashamed of participating in such a discussion in which he has no ability¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴³. 'Abd al-ʿAzīz and 'Abd al-Majīd, op. cit., 1:250.

¹⁴⁴. ibid., 1:251-252; al-Shaybānī, op. cit., p. 415.

Modern scholars refer this methodology to the great ancient scholar, Socrates (d. 399.B.C.) whose methods were later subsequently developed in accordance with later norms and religious values.

However, Islam has laid down several rules and prerequisites for Muslims who intend to get themselves involved in it. Otherwise, the debate and dialogue would be changed into a pandemonium which would no doubt hinder the parties from arriving at a good result.

Such rules and regulations are mainly related to the *akhlāq* which a man of dialogue has to abide by. Discussion and dialogue which take place without observing etiquettes of disagreement are against the teaching of the Qur'ān¹⁴⁵.

Most of the Islamic sciences and branches of knowledge were developed and attained their glory through this method. Inter alia, we may mention *fiqh*, *uṣūl*, and *‘ilm al-kalām*.

There are many arguments in books of *fiqh* which show the line of arguments which were put forward in order to arrive at a rationally sound conclusion. This approach to the conclusion gave birth to the emergence of

¹⁴⁵. The Qur'ān says "and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious". See *sūrat al-Nahl* (16):125.

different interpretations of one and the same text of the law. Thus, the different schools of thought (*madhāhib*) came into existence.

The advancement of the Muʿtazilites during the reign of al-Maʿmūn and their hostile attitude towards other schools of thought at that time had a very big influence on the development of dialogue or debate to the extent that the Caliph al-Maʿmūn himself became involved in it.

The debates and dialogue, in fact, were not confined to the caliph's court only, but were dominant in scholarly circles and centres of higher learning. Due to the great influence of dialogue in Muslims' life there arose among the *ʿulamāʾ* the idea of introducing ethics or etiquettes of debate or dialogue (*ādāb al-ikhtilāf*) in order to protect the sanctity, the aims and the result expected from this method¹⁴⁶.

Usually debates were held between teachers, while dialogue took place between teachers and their students or amongst the students. Though Muslim scholars learned the art of debate and dialogue from Greek logic, the basic ideas, however, were from the Qurʾān, hadith and from the *salaf al-ṣāliḥ*.

¹⁴⁶. For further information see Ṭāhā Jābir al-ʿAlwānī who has written a book specifically on this issue entitled *The ethics of Disagreement in Islam*, (Herndon, Virginia: International Institute of Islamic Thought), 1993.

The Qur'ān¹⁴⁷ uses this method in several places to convince and persuade the pagans. For instance God raises several issues in the form of questions to the disbelievers to which He does not provide answers, for they are known to those people. Instead, he puts a challenge to them by saying time and again "can there be another god besides Allah?"¹⁴⁸. He ends up with a challenge to them to bring forth their argument (*burhān*) if they are telling the truth. Then He reinforces His argument that none in the heavens or on earth knows what is hidden except God. The same situation is found in *sūrat al-Mu'minūn* (23):84-90, where God once again challenges these people on the issue of ownership and mastership of this universe. He ends up His challenge with the proclamation that the disbelievers are the liars.

Hadith also has a great deal to say about this method. The Prophet used to adopt this method in teaching, approaching his companions on matters they could not cope with through their own reasoning such as life in the hereafter, the unseen world (*‘ālam al-ghayb*) etc. For instance, once the Prophet approached Mu‘ādh b. Jabal with a question about the rights of God over His servants. He told the prophet that only God and his Messenger knew that. Upon that the Prophet told him that the rights of God over His servants are to be worshipped and not to be associated with others¹⁴⁹.

¹⁴⁷. For detailed discussions about this method in the Qur'ān refer to 2.5.3. pp. 126-128.

¹⁴⁸. *Sūrat al-Naml* (27):59-64.

¹⁴⁹. Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 4:250.

Judging from the actions of the *salaf al-ṣāliḥ*¹⁵⁰, we come to know that they too adopted this method in their teaching. It was reported that there was a great fluidity in thought and a remarkable tolerance of different views¹⁵¹. For instance, Abū Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, the formulator of the orthodox creed, had himself heard the lectures of his *Muʿtazilī* master al-Jubbāʾī, though at times they had fierce debates over certain issues of theology¹⁵². Abū Ḥanīfah used to use this method in deducing laws (*ḥukm*) from the sources with his students. When any agreement was reached he used to ask one of his students to write it down. Imām Mālik used to have disagreements with all his teachers, and he encouraged his students to have disagreements with him¹⁵³. An outstanding example of this is his brilliant student, al-Shāfiʿī. He formed his own school of thought (*madhhab*) and freed himself from being overshadowed by his teacher's school of thought¹⁵⁴. Once there was a tough debate between al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and his student Wāṣil b. ʿAḡāʾ¹⁵⁵. The latter

¹⁵⁰. Those who lived during the first three hundred years of Islam. To be precise, they are the first three generations of Islam, viz, the ʿompanions (*al-ṣaḥābah*), the successors (*al-tābīʿūn*) and the followers of the successors (*tābīʿū al-tābīʿīn*). The concept of *salafiyyah* was actually introduced by Ibn Taymiyyah. al-Kaylani, op. cit., p. 120. See also Abdul Wahab Zakaria, "Gerakan Salafiyyah", in *Dinamika Dakwah*, (Petaling Jaya: Budaya Ilmu Sdn. Bhd., 1992), p. 139.

¹⁵¹. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, p. 182.

¹⁵². Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, p. 182.

¹⁵³. Asmāʾ Ḥasan Fahmī, *Mabādīʾ al-Tarbiyah al-Islāmiyyah*, (Cairo, 1948), p. 122 cited in Ghunaymah, op. cit., p. 201.

¹⁵⁴. Ghunaymah, op. cit., p. 201. See also, al-Shaybānī, op. cit., p. 419.

¹⁵⁵. He is Abū Ḥudhayfah al-Ghazzāl Wāṣil b. ʿAḡāʾ, a great theologian, regarded as the founder of the *Muʿtazilah* school of thought. He used to study under al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. He objected to the ideas of both *ahl al-Jamāʿah* and *al-Khawārij* over the status of one who commits grave sins (*murtakib al-kabāʾir*). He was the author of many books and among them eight were very popular amongst his circle. He was born in Medina in 80H. However, the exact date of his death was in

had left the former's court for he did not agree with the former on issues related to one who commits major sins (*murtakib al-kabā'ir*)¹⁵⁶.

During this time, encouragement of individual initiative and academic freedom for both teachers and pupils were perfectly observed. Nakosteen has portrayed the situation of the *ḥalaqah* in the college of Baghdad during the golden days of Islam, where an inquiring student, who greeted the great teacher with devoted *salāms* often ended the day with an intellectual fist fight with his master in defence of some principles, refutation of others, or hairsplitting argument over insignificant details¹⁵⁷.

Actually this method was well-known and well-practised in Islamic circles until the eighth century A.H., after which people came to rely on reading and started ignoring discussion, dialogue and disputation. Initially, the 'ulamā' summarised books in the hope that it would help the students to memorize the subject¹⁵⁸, and later this developed into widespread use of

dispute. According to Ibn Khallikān he died in 181H, whereas Yāqūt opines that he died in 131. This difference came about owing to the gap (*bayāḍ*) in the original text between the words *ihdā* and *wa mi'ah*. See Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., 6:11; Yāqūt, op. cit., 5:569.

¹⁵⁶. Wāṣil believed that one who commits major sins is neither a believer (*Muslim*) nor a non-believer (*Kāfir*), his status is in between those two, whereas his teacher al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī held the idea that the perpetrator is still a believer. At the other extreme, *al-Khawārij* held the idea that he is no longer a believer. Due to this dispute he and his followers left his teacher's circle. Because of this disassociation (*iftizāl*) from his teacher's group he and his followers were thus called *Mu'tazilah*. See Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., 6:8; See also Yāqūt, op. cit., 5:568.

¹⁵⁷. Nakosteen, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

¹⁵⁸. Ghunaymah, op. cit., p. 188.

reading. As well as summarizing books the ‘*ulamā*’ began to write interpretations (*sharḥ*) of a text (*matn*). Other scholars would produce a commentary (*ḥāshiyah*) on the interpretations (*sharḥ*) while some others would produce a further explanation of the *ḥāshiyah* (*taqrīr*)¹⁵⁹. Now scholars were content to read or interpret the ideas of their predecessors, and as a result students were often lacking in initiative and originality. They were afraid to apply new ideas to the realities of changing life, their intellectual ability remained underdeveloped, and during discussions they were satisfied to listen to others and kept themselves quiet¹⁶⁰. They did not gather knowledge except what they had memorized from the books¹⁶¹, and came to be known as imitators (*muqallidūn*)¹⁶². Ibn Khaldūn criticized the habit of complete reliance on the method of memorizing in teaching very fiercely in his *Muqaddimah*¹⁶³. To him this habit is not a scientific one. It damages the creativity of students. According to him though some of them spend most of their lives attending scholarly sessions, still, one finds them silent. They do not talk and do not discuss matters. As a result, when they enter into a discussion or disputation, or do some teaching, their scientific habit is found to be

¹⁵⁹. *ibid.*, pp. 188-189. In the context of *pondok* education see the discussion in Chapter Four, 4.4.1.

¹⁶⁰. Ibn Khaldūn, *op. cit.*, pp. 478-479.

¹⁶¹. Ghunaymah, *op. cit.*, p. 189.

¹⁶². See note 8 in the Introductory Chapter.

¹⁶³. Ibn Khaldūn, *op. cit.*, pp. 478-479 and 588.

defective¹⁶⁴. However, this should not be misconstrued to mean that there were no original thinkers in Islam. As I have mentioned above scholars who came after the eighth century *Hijrī* were much inclined to adding commentaries on works written by their predecessors. This in a way had hindered the process of *ijtihād*, which might lead one to conclude that there were no original thinkers after the said period.

2.6.5. Study circle (*ḥalaqah*)

This method has been known from a very early period¹⁶⁵. In the case of Islam it is a unique educational experience and was the simplest type of early Muslim education. The system can be traced back to the time of the Prophet Muḥammad. It is well-known that before the Prophet pronounced Islam publicly after receiving divine revelation he had a secret educational group which initially met in a cave outside of the city of Mecca. When the number of new converts increased to forty, this group moved to a house belonging to Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Arḳam b. Abī al-Arḳam where such a session continued to be held for about four years. They were called *al-sābiqūn al-awwalūn*, which means that they were the first to receive his message. Students would normally place themselves around the teacher in a circle on the floor crosslegged. Thus, the *ḥalaqah* probably originated from the sitting

¹⁶⁴. *ibid.*, p. 479.

¹⁶⁵. According to Ghunaymah, this method of teaching was practised before the emergence of Islam. See Ghunaymah, *op.cit.*, p. 177.

arrangement of the class, as the word *ḥalaqah* means everything that is in the form of a circle and hollow in the middle¹⁶⁶. According to this system the teacher normally seated himself on a dais¹⁶⁷ or cushion against a wall or pillar of the lecture hall or beside a pillar in a mosque and had the students seated surrounding him. However, it was observed that the students would form only a semi-circle¹⁶⁸ around the teacher as it was improper to sit behind him. Thus it can be concluded that the *ḥalaqah* is originally a *majlis* which was principally a study circle held in a mosque and was also held later in private houses, bookshops and libraries¹⁶⁹.

In the modern day, the definition of the study circle varies according to the place and aims of the group or to the influence of varying cultural contexts. The form of study circle found in Sweden, for instance is not similar to that in America. The study circles organized by the YMCAs which are supported by churches are not similar to those organized by many Islamic organizations¹⁷⁰. According to *The Study Circle: A Brief Introduction*, the study

¹⁶⁶. *Ḥalqah* or *ḥalaqah* is defined as *kull shay'in mustadīr khālī al-wasāṭ* which means anything circular where the centre is left open. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, op. cit., 1:189.

¹⁶⁷. It is said that Abū Bakr al-Shāshī al-Mustazhirī (d.507H) normally sat on a dais as did others while teaching, and one day he used a handkerchief to wipe away his tears as he cried frequently during his teaching. See Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., 5:220.

¹⁶⁸. Tibawi, *Islamic Education*, (London: Luzac and Company Ltd., 1979), p. 48.

¹⁶⁹. Tibawi, "Origin and Character of al-Madrasah", *BSOAS* 25/1962, p. 226.

¹⁷⁰. Sidek Baba, "The Malaysian Study Circle Movement and Some Implication for Educational development", Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis, Northern Illinois University, May 1991, p. 12.

circle is referred to as "the most efficient form of adult education" and it goes on as follows: "the philosophy of the study circle implies that knowledge cannot become living and important until it corresponds to a personal need. No two study circles are alike, nor should they be"¹⁷¹.

Due to the utmost importance of this method in our study¹⁷² it is worthwhile to glance through the idea of the study circle from the Western point of view. This can be achieved through a study of the definitions and perceptions given by some of the Western scholars themselves. Blid describes a study circle as representing the principles of mutual assistance and cooperation applied to the striving for knowledge and culture. It demands from everyone according to his ability, and gives to everyone according to his needs. Every member should know that study implies pain but that joint work makes the pain less, the reward larger, and gives good humor, happiness and stimulation in addition to the companionship¹⁷³. The International Union of Food (IUF) in its Education Programme states that "a study circle consists of a group of people who work together on common problems and questions. The circle is a democratic way of working. The cooperation between participants constitutes the very basis of work. It means that everybody is

¹⁷¹. *The Study Circle: A Brief Introduction*, (Stockholm: Brevskolan Correspondence School, 1978), p. 23, cited in *ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁷². It is considered the nucleus of method of teaching at *pondok* centres. For detailed discussions see Chapter Four, 4.4.1., p. 272 and the analysis in Chapter Five, 5.3.

¹⁷³. Blid, H., *Education by the People-Study Circle*, (Ludvika, Sweden: Brunnsvik's Folk High School, 1983), p. 15, cited in Baba, op. cit., p. 12.

responsible for making the circle as useful and pleasant as possible"¹⁷⁴. Study Circles International (SCI), an American-based institution in its Resource Brief (What is a Study Circle?) gives a clear concept of the study circle. In its brochure, the basic format and philosophy of the study circle is described as follows: A dozen people are comfortably seated around a living room or meeting room, one speaking, several others looking as though they would like to make a point, one skimming an article as if searching for a particular item. Another is scanning the group and the others listening attentively. This is the study circle in action¹⁷⁵.

In Sweden, almost one third of the adults are engaged in some form of adult education¹⁷⁶. The study circle, now almost a century old, is the most popular form of adult education. Study circles offered Sweden's under-educated adult population an opportunity for insights, understanding and skills that were not available through the formal school system. They initially met in homes, churches, meeting halls etc. usually without a formally trained leader and with limited materials, sharing ideas and experiences in a democratic atmosphere. Thus, study circles became part of the educational process in the society. Therefore, the government recognised and formalized

¹⁷⁴. International Union of Food, *Education Programme: Newsletter*, (Washington D.C.: IUF North American Regional Organization, 1982), pp. 2-3, in *ibid.*, p. 12.

¹⁷⁵. Study Circle International (SCI), "What Is the Study Circle", *Resource Brief*, 1990, p. 1, cited in *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

¹⁷⁶. Sweden has 8.3 million population. About 6 million are adults. *ibid.*, p. 14.

the practice and organizational structure of study circles in 1947 by subsidizing the leaders, salaries and materials¹⁷⁷.

In Denmark, study circles are run by the Organization for Popular Enlightenment, which comprises three major organizations and 17 minor ones¹⁷⁸. Like Sweden, study circles in Denmark are also subsidized by the government. The temperance movement and various religious and political groups found in the study circle a kind of self-help arrangement that enabled an essentially uneducated populace to understand the issues of the day and learn the practical skills necessary to improve their lot in life. What is important is that the study organizations and the popular movements with which they are affiliated have accepted the study circle methods as their way of formulating policy on new issues. Study circles in Scandinavian countries have developed well in a non-formal setting and have enhanced the roots of democracy which give the public awareness and responsibilities to think what is best for their countries as well for them¹⁷⁹.

In America, the study circle is not a new idea¹⁸⁰. There are a number of models for the study circle in America. Meeting together for common

¹⁷⁷. *ibid.*, p. 16.

¹⁷⁸. In 1975, there were about 700,000 participants out of an adult population of over 5 millions. *ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁷⁹. *ibid.*, pp. 21-24.

¹⁸⁰. N.D. Kurland, *The Scandinavian Study Circle: An Idea for the U.S.*, New York. *Life long Learning*, 1982, p. 24-30, cited in *ibid.*, p. 24.

understanding and decision making refers back to the country's origin when town meetings provided a forum for colonists to debate and resolve public issues. Religious organizations throughout America conduct group discussion and informal study classes. Besides Jewish and Christian-oriented study Groups, organizations such as Muslims from Malaysia, Egypt and others have circles called *halaqah* and *usrah*¹⁸¹.

In Muslim countries, non-formal education is considered a life-long process. As I have mentioned elsewhere, it took place based on a tradition of using mosques as bases of study. Makdisi describes how the mosque became a centre of higher learning where various subjects were taught through a study circle¹⁸². Fazlur Rahman stresses that schools of higher learning were an expansion from this study circle¹⁸³. All in all, the study circle with variant names and epithets is actually a continuous activity in transmitting knowledge from generation to generation without any break. It was and still is the main activity in the educational process, especially at the *pondok* education in the Malay Peninsula. This point will be discussed in Chapter Four, 4.2., 4.4.1. and Chapter Five, 5.3.

¹⁸¹. *ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

¹⁸². George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges, Institution of Learning in Islam and the West*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), p. 12.

¹⁸³ Study circle was in early Islam meant for adult education, for the masses, through which they were given instruction in the Qur'an and in the faith. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, (London: University of Chicago Press Ltd., 1979), p. 182.

Since the mosque is a place for worship people would prostrate themselves in prayer before God and remain seated (*qa'ada*) in meditation. When the class was ready shortly after the prayer, the teacher and his students would sit up (*jalasa*) from the position of prostration¹⁸⁴ and the class or *majlis* of *halaqah* would begin¹⁸⁵.

In the early days of Islam the *halaqah* of a learned *shaykh* in a mosque remained a popular first choice. However, the circle did not cover the so-called religious subjects alone, but it increasingly covered linguistic and even philosophical subjects. Thus we see that al-Shāfi'ī held a circle on many subjects for years in which he taught Qur'ānic Exegesis, traditions, philology, rhetoric, grammar and poetry¹⁸⁶. He started with the *halaqah* of the Qur'ān right after the morning prayer (*ṣalāt al-ṣubḥ*), the *halaqah* of hadith at sunrise (*idhā ṭala'at al-shams*), and thereafter the *halaqah* of discussion and disputation, whereafter they dispersed. Then came students of linguistics, grammar, prosody (*ʿarūd*) and poetry. When noon-time came they dispersed and al-Shāfi'ī ended his circle¹⁸⁷. His methodology of instruction varied, ranging from ordinary lecture to question and answer, and many times he was

¹⁸⁴. Practically speaking, they would not immediately start the class after having finished the prayer. Thus, the meaning would probably be that they did not do other activities after the prayer except waiting for the class to begin.

¹⁸⁵. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new ed.), Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1986, Vol. 5, s.v. Madrasah, p. 1123.

¹⁸⁶. Yāqūt, op. cit., 2:204.

¹⁸⁷. *ibid.*, 5:204.

in stiff debates with his prominent contemporaries, especially the eminent disciple of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan¹⁸⁸ and also Ishāq b. Rāḥawayh¹⁸⁹. Due to this approach, people turned to his circle to the extent that most famous traditionists of his time used to get in touch with him before giving any answer which seemed to be problematic¹⁹⁰. The same happened with Abu Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī. He, at one time, dictated poetry in the mosque at Fuṣṭāṭ and debated with Abū Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Sirāj al-Miṣrī, the most notable and knowledgeable person in Egypt at that time. al-Ṭabarī lectured there in many fields, ranging from Qurʾān, *fiqh* and hadith to linguistics, grammar and poetry. It seemed to Ibn Sirāj that al-Ṭabarī was the only one who had memorized and mastered the poem of *al-Tirimmāh*, upon which he asked him to dictate it at *the bayt al-māl* of the mosque for fear of it becoming defunct¹⁹¹. Like al-Shāfiʿī, he was also involved in fierce debates with his opponents. At one time he was stoned by the followers of Ibn Ḥanbal for his comment that Ibn Ḥanbal knew nothing about the hadith *al-julūs ʿalā al-ʿarsh*, ending the debate with the meaningful lines of poetry:

subḥān man laysa lahū anīs,

¹⁸⁸. al-Shāfiʿī refuted Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan on many occasions, be it in the court of the Caliph or in front of the latter's students, and in many issues usually sparked by the followers of Abū Ḥanīfah. *ibid.*, 5:193-197.

¹⁸⁹. For the case of his debate with Ishāq see *ibid.*, 5:199-120.

¹⁹⁰. Sufyān b. ʿUyaynah used to refer to him in an issue related to a prophetic hadith. For details see *ibid.*, 5:201-202.

¹⁹¹. *ibid.*, 5:250.

*wa lā lahū fī ‘arshihī jalīs*¹⁹².

which means, Glory be to the One Who has neither an intimate friend,
Nor has He got a companion on His Throne.

This pattern of the educational process remains unchanged from its traditional form. The *ḥalaqah* or study circle is still dominant in the process of teaching and learning.

From this definition it appears to us that the *ḥalaqah* is more or less a system of education¹⁹³ rather than a method of teaching. However, as we go further into the study of the subjects, we see that *ḥalaqah*, apart from being a system, is also a method of teaching¹⁹⁴ whereby a series of specific instructional activities take place, starting with reading a text, followed by its translation, if it is in Arabic, and going on to a grammatical analysis, semantic interpretation and finally to a deductive conclusion¹⁹⁵.

Before the teacher starts his class, he first makes his ablution and then starts his class by praising God and saying a prayer for the Prophet¹⁹⁶. In

¹⁹². *ibid.*, 5:252-253.

¹⁹³. Wan Zahidi Wan Teh, "Pengemaskinian Sistem pengajian Pondok di Pulau Pinang" in *Pendidikan Islam Malaysia*, (Bangi: University Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1992), p. 105.

¹⁹⁴. Ishak, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

¹⁹⁵. *ibid.*

¹⁹⁶. al-Shaybānī, *op. cit.*, p. 420.

conducting his class he either gives a lecture or reads and interprets a book of a certain scholar that he might be interested in. He usually ends his class either by reciting *sūrat al-fatīḥah*¹⁹⁷, or *sūrat al-ʿAṣr*¹⁹⁸ or by reciting a final prayer (*duʿā*) and blessing¹⁹⁹.

2.6.6. Memorization (*ḥifẓ*)

Muslims in the past regarded the power of memory highly and considered memorization to be one of the aims of education. Memory played a very great part not only in the education of the young but also in that of adults²⁰⁰. According to al-Māwardī, Arabs in the past had a very high regard for memory and their memories were indeed powerful. However, they gave equal respect to writing²⁰¹. Stress on the importance of memorizing characterizes the Muslim works on pedagogy, and indeed reference to memorizing in Muslim literature is abundant. For instance Ibn Ḥanbal, the famous Muslim jurist and a disciple-colleague of al-Shāfiʿī is said to have

¹⁹⁷. *ibid.*

¹⁹⁸. It was the practice of the Companions of the Prophet to recite this *surah* before they dispersed in order to remind them of their covenant to this Divine ordinance (*al-dustūr al-ilāhī*). Quṭb, *op. cit.*, 6:3971.

¹⁹⁹. A. S. Tritton, *Materials on Muslim Education in the Middle Ages*, (London: Luzac and Co. Ltd., 1957), p. 50.

²⁰⁰. A. H. Fahmy, "The Educational Ideas of the Muslims in the Middle Ages", M. A. Thesis, University of Birmingham, Oct. 1939.

²⁰¹. al-Māwardī, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-57 and 60.

memorized 1,000,000 hadith²⁰². The traditionist, al-Bukhārī, is said to have committed to memory when he was young not less than 15,000 hadith. Al-Zarnūjī reports that Qāḍī Khān once said it is necessary for a student to memorize a book of *fiqh* because it will make it easy for him to memorize what he would learn in future²⁰³. Abū al- Maḥāsīn ‘Abd al-Wāḥid b. Ismā‘īl al-Rūyānī, a great Shāfi‘ite scholar during Niẓām al-Mulk’s period, is reported to have said that even if all the books of al-Shāfi‘ī had been burnt, he would have been able to dictate them all from his own memory²⁰⁴. This is perhaps due to:

- i. Difficulty in obtaining writing materials during the first century of the Hijrah.
- ii. The desire to follow the sunnah of the Prophet who always encouraged people to memorize the Qur’an and hadith.
- iii. The development of the science of Hadith in order to distinguish between the genuine and the fabricated hadith and lastly,
- iv. The emergence of the sciences of language and literature that need the power of memory to master them²⁰⁵.

The jurists and *muḥaddithūn* were among those who paid great attention to it. They gave the great memorizer the special name of *ḥāfiẓ* and considered

²⁰². *wa kān yahfaz alf alfi ḥadīthin, wa kān min aṣḥāb al-īmām al-Shāfi‘ī wa khawāṣṣih*. Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., 1:64.

²⁰³. al-Zarnūjī, op. cit., p. 149.

²⁰⁴. Ibn Khallikān, op. cit., 3:198.

²⁰⁵. Ghunaymah, op. cit., pp. 191-192. See also al-Shaybānī, op. cit., pp. 423-424.

this the highest category of memorization. Due to their great concern for this, they introduced certain practices to maintain the power of memory. The most outstanding of them was al-Zarnūjī, who introduced ways to preserve the power of memory and to boost it. He emphasizes the function of memory in education when he says that the scholars should be prepared to memorize diligently. He suggests that the scholar should revise the subject immediately after the lecture. He should repeat five times what he learnt yesterday, and four times what he learnt the day before, two times what he knew two days before and finally one repetition for the earlier material²⁰⁶. The author is concerned with what strengthens the memory. To achieve this his advice is; persistent effort to learn and study with little food, night prayer and reading Qur'ān, cleaning the teeth, drinking honey and eating oriental frankincense (*kundur*) with sugar and also twenty one raisins every morning before breakfast, and to abstain from eating things that increase phlegm etc.

Other than that he advises a student to abstain from things which are regarded as causing forgetfulness such as eating damp coriander (*kusbara*) and fermented apples, committing sins, misdeeds, anxieties, sorrows and absorption in worldly concerns, and finally reading the inscriptions on tombstones and looking at the crucified²⁰⁷.

²⁰⁶. al-Zarnūjī, op. cit., p. 148.

²⁰⁷. *ibid.*, pp. 170-173.

In other words, al-Zarnūjī attributes remembering and forgetting to causes both psychological and physical, which is quite reasonable. Some of the things, however, which he mentions as causing remembering or forgetting are not convincing but merely amusing²⁰⁸. For this advice he was fiercely criticised by al-Ahwānī for not being realistic and relying on the superstitions of his society²⁰⁹.

In the case of taking wrong food it is reported that taking a wrong herbal preparation will endanger one's memory or mind. For instance, the grandfather of al-Balādhurī is said to have lost his memory and become completely forgetful for the rest of his life after he accidentally took the preparation known as *balādhur*²¹⁰.

From the above it is safe to say that the great emphasis on memory is not essentially a pedagogical necessity but rather a demonstration of piety and mechanical imitation of practices which prevailed in early Islamic times because the majority of them, at the emergence of Islam, were illiterate.

2.6.7. Understanding (*fiqh*)

²⁰⁸. Fahmy, op. cit., p. 150.

²⁰⁹. al-Ahwānī, op. cit., p. 239.

²¹⁰. There was an opinion that al-Balādhurī himself was one of those who damaged his mind by accidentally taking this preparation. Yāqūt, op. cit., 2:48.

Though Muslims in the past emphasized the ability to memorize it does not mean that they ignored the most important aspect of the process of learning, that is understanding. They considered memorization a means, or tool (*wasīlah*) and not an end.

Almost all scholars of Islam place ample emphasis on understanding in learning. Ibn Khaldūn condemns those who give extreme due to the method of memorization²¹¹. Al-Namarī al-Qurṭubī stresses that the understanding of the subject must be observed before someone memorizes it²¹². Al-Zarnūjī urges his students not to write something that they do not understand, because it could weaken the memory and eliminate its power. Instead, students should ponder over something, perceive ideas and try to understand what their teacher says while learning it²¹³.

In Islamic circles this type of idea has been confirmed by the division of knowledge into *riwāyah*, which is based on memory, and *dirāyah*, which is based on understanding.

The Qur'ān condemns those who do not understand things. In *sūrat al-*

²¹¹. See the discussion on this in 2.6.4. above, p. 136.

²¹². According to him the process of gaining knowledge must go through six steps viz. correct intention (*al-niyyah*), good listening (*al-istimāʿ*), understanding (*al-fahm*), memorizing (*al-ḥifẓ*), practising (*al-ʿamal*), disseminating (*al-nashr*). al-Namarī al-Qurṭubī, op. cit., 1:118.

²¹³. al-Zarnūjī, op. cit., pp. 136-137.

Kahf (18):93, we read "He (Dhū al-Qarnayn) found beneath them, a people who scarcely understood a word". In *sūrat al-Nisā'* (4):78 we read "...but what has come to these people, that they fail to understand a single fact?"

Imām Fakhr al-Rāzī in interpreting this verse said that they do not understand the original idea or the actual aim. Therefore, *tashrī'* in Islam is called *al-fiqh* because the basis, essence or original is understanding which is *al-fiqh*. Al-Kirmānī said, "Knowledge will not be perfect without understanding". 'Alī is reported to have said "By God, we have nothing except the book of God and the power of understanding that is given to a believer." He has given understanding (*fahm*) a stage lower than memorizing the Book of God²¹⁴.

The Prophet is related to have said, *li yuballigh al-shāhid al-ghā'ib, fa inna al-shāhid 'asā an yuballigh man huwa aw'ā lahū minhu*, which means let the present one inform the one who is absent, since the former might perhaps inform one who is more informed than him (listener)²¹⁵. In another tradition he is said to have said, *fa rubb ḥāmil fiqh lā faqha lah, wa fī riwāyah ākhar, ...ghayr faqīh*²¹⁶, which means that many a bearer of knowledge (*fiqh*) does not understand (it). The idea here is that the one who memorizes knowledge is not

²¹⁴. Gunaymah, op. cit., pp. 197-198. See also, al-Shaybānī, op. cit., p. 425.

²¹⁵. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, op. cit., 1:190.

²¹⁶. al-Ḥākim, op. cit., 1:163-164.

necessarily the one who understands more. However, it would be perfect if he memorizes and at the same time has a good understanding about it.

Mālik is reported to have said that true knowledge is not that which is obtained by the method of *riwāyah*, but the actual knowledge is a light cast by God into one's heart. By this, he means that it is necessary to understand the meaning²¹⁷. In this regard Ḥājī Khalīfah clearly indicates that memorizing alone does not lead to the creation of a faculty or power which enables one to analyse and arrange one's knowledge, and make deductions²¹⁸. What he means by this is that understanding is essential in creating a faculty or power, without which it would be impossible for it to be achieved.

2.6.8. Visit and Travel (*riḥlah*)

Travel is actually good for doing research, getting in touch with *'ulamā'* and well-known figures, and receiving the pure language from those who have not been corrupted by modernization.

This method was observed from the early days of Islam. It was said that Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh said, "A hadith reached me and I bought a camel to make a journey. It took me a month to reach Syria where I met a Companion, 'Abd

²¹⁷. Ghunaymah, *ibid.* p. 198; al-Shaybānī, *ibid.*, p. 425.

²¹⁸. Fahmy, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

Allāh b. Anīs al-Anṣārī²¹⁹. Saʿīd b. Musayyab said that he had walked days and nights to search out and scrutinize a hadith²²⁰.

The idea is that any knowledge obtained by a person is better than the difficulties suffered for its sake and there is a great reward for the difficulties shouldered by travellers.

In this respect al-Shaʿbī said:

"If some one travels from Syria to the end of Yemen to listen to wise sayings, I could hardly see his journey as being of no avail"²²¹.

Among factors that encouraged scholars to undertake journeys are the following:

- i. There was no demarcation line or borders dividing Muslim lands.
- ii. There was great respect for those who possess or preserve knowledge, travel in quest of knowledge, and for the wayfarers in Muslim society.
- iii. There were sufficient funds to finance seekers after knowledge and travellers.

2.7. Elementary and Advanced Education.

We learn that when the centre of Islamic Administration moved out of

²¹⁹. al-Namarī al-Qurṭubī, op. cit., 1:93.

²²⁰. *ibid.*, p. 94

²²¹. *ibid.*, p. 95

Madinah the system of administration and people's life were much influenced by outsiders. During the reign of the Umayyads, when the centre was in Damascus, they were much influenced by the previous civilization of Byzantine Syria and Syrian scholars²²². This is attributed to the effort made initially by Mu'āwiyah b. Abī Sufyān and later by his descendants. In the time of the Abbasids, the centre was moved once again from Damascus to Baghdad. Life here was very much influenced by the Persians. Thus, the system varied between these three centres, so much so that it influenced the pattern of the pursuit of knowledge. However, the basis of knowledge still centred around the traditional concept, that is on the basis of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

We have seen that great attention had been paid by Muslim scholars to achieving the aims of education based on the nature of knowledge. They did not attain such an achievement with little effort, but rather worked hard for a proper methodology of teaching.

We find that most of the great thinkers after the generation of *tābi'ūn* had made contributions in developing knowledge and *akhlāq* no matter in what field they specialized. The following are some of them listed according to chronological order to show that later generations had been influenced by the virtues of knowledge enshrined by the Prophet, as a result of which they

²²². Kh. Semaan, "Education in Islam from the Jahiliyyah to Ibn Khaldun", *MW*, 56, 1966, p. 193.

produced important books on knowledge, the ethics of the teacher-student relationship or related topics:

1. Ibn Saḥnūn, Muḥammad (d. 256H), *Kitāb Ādāb al-Muʿallimīn*.
2. al-Ājirī, Abū Bakr (d. 360H), *Kitāb Akhlāq Ahl al-Qurʾān*
3. al-Qābisī, Abu Ḥasan ʿAlī (d. 403H), *Kitāb al-Risālah al-Mufaṣṣalah li Ahwāl al-Muʿallimīn wa Ahkām al-Muʿallimīn wa al-Mutaʿallimīn*.
4. Ibn Miskawayh, (d. 421H), *Kitāb Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq wa Taḥhīr al-Aʿrāq* and *Kitāb al-Fawz al-Aṣghar*.
5. al-Māwardī, Abu al-Ḥasan ʿAlī al-Baṣrī (d. 450), *Kitāb Adab al-Dunyā wa al-Dīn*.
6. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Thābit, (d. 461/463H), *Kitāb Taqyīd al-ʿIlm* and *Kitāb al-Riḥlah fī Ṭalab al-Ḥadīth*.
7. al-Namari al-Qurṭubī, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr (d. 463H), *Kitāb Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍlih*.
8. al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid, (d. 505), *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn* and his small treatise *Ayyuhā al-Walad*.
9. al-Zarnūjī, Burhān al-Islām, (d. between 571-620), *Kitāb Taʿlīm al-Mutaʿallim Ṭarīq al-Taʿallum*.
10. Ibn Jamāʿah al-Kinānī, Saʿd Allāh, (d. 733H), *Kitāb Tadhkirat al-Sāmiʿ wa al-Mutakallim fī Adab al-ʿĀlim wa al-Mutaʿallim*.
11. Ibn Rajab al-Ḥanbalī, (d. 795H), *Kitāb Faḍl al-Salaf ʿAlā al-Khalaf*.
12. Ibn Khaldūn, (d. 808H), *al-Muqaddimah*.
13. Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytami, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, (d. 973H), *Kitāb Taḥrīr al-*

The importance of the methodology of teaching and learning stands out clearly in the writing of such thinkers especially Ibn Saḥnūn, al-Ājirī, al-Qābisī, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr al-Namarī al-Qurṭubī, al-Ghazālī, al-Zarnūjī and Ibn Khaldūn. They have influenced and summed up Muslim thought on education, and especially on methodology. Unlike the previous two generations²²³, they have distinguished between methods of teaching especially of the Qurʾān to children, and the teaching of older people. According to Tritton, the division between elementary and advanced education was sharp, and it must be treated separately²²⁴. However, it is not our intention to explain all the ideas about this, but instead to mention the ideas of several scholars for the basis of our discussion later. Thus, al-Ghazālī, al-Zarnūjī and especially Ibn Khaldūn's ideas represent others.

2.7.1. Teaching Children

There was no uniformity with regard to the age of sending children to school. It was only a moral and religious obligation enjoined upon the guardian of the child to make him acquainted at least with the Qurʾān and the precepts of Islam. The time-frame that he might spend at the school was not fixed. During the time of Ibn Khaldūn, the children of the Maghrib and the

²²³. The generations of the Prophet and the Companions.

²²⁴. Tritton, op. cit., p. 1.

native Berbers might remain there until the age of puberty at the latest²²⁵.

The child began by learning the Qur'ān by heart. Reading, writing and grammar might be taught simultaneously with the learning of the Qur'ān²²⁶. The teaching of the Qur'ān was combined with teaching religious principles and practices such as prayers, fasting and so on. In some cases poetry, arithmetic, and hadith were also introduced. At this stage the teaching of the Qur'ān was given preference or at the least it went simultaneously with other basic subjects with the exception of the ideas of Ibn al-ʿArabī who suggested that the Qur'an should be taught later on when children have been acquainted with other basic subjects²²⁷.

The Qur'ān was taught by memorizing and repeating passages after their teacher (*talqīn*). No meaning was explained to them. At the same time they practiced writing on wooden tablets. In some cases passages from the Qur'ān were used in teaching the children the art of writing. This again sheds additional light on the religious life of the children at this level of age for they are very much influenced by whatever they learned during their childhood²²⁸. Religious zeal was partly responsible for the great stress on

²²⁵. Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., p. 594.

²²⁶. Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Khalaf al-Qābisī, *al-Risālah al-Mufaṣṣalah li Aḥwāl al-Muʿallimīn wa Aḥkām al-Muʿallimīn wa al-Mutaʿallimīn*. See al-Ahwānī, op. cit., p. 326.

²²⁷. Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., p. 596.

²²⁸. *ibid.*, p. 594.

memory, which was a characteristic feature of the method of teaching of both the children and the adults in the Muslim world.

al-Ghazālī stresses that children should be carefully treated during the process of teaching. Their limited capacity for understanding should be taken into account. He believes that among the first duties of the teacher is to teach things that are within the comprehension of the child, for too difficult material would only confuse him²²⁹.

al-Zarnūjī²³⁰ has explained in great detail how a beginner (*mubtadi'*) should be taught. It must be started with little and then gradually the subject is added to. Repetition is very important as well as memorization. It is better to repeat a thousand times than give them many subjects all at once²³¹. Just like al-Ghazālī, al-Zarnūjī suggests that the teacher must start with something

²²⁹. al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 1:76.

²³⁰. al-Ahwānī considers al-Zarnūjī's book as not valuable for it repeats ideas by the previous scholars especially al-Ghazālī and contains negative attitudes such as blind submission (*tawākul*), laziness (*kasal*) and dependancy ('*adam al-ʿitimād ʿalā al-nafs*'). His main criticism is on al-Zarnūjī's suggestion about practice of *shukr* which according to the latter would increase ones knowledge. This is not shared by al-Ahwānī who opines that by mere *shukr* would not increase knowledge. Instead one has to work for it. However, the editor of al-Zarnūjī's book, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir believes that al-Ahwānī has misconstrued al-Zarnūjī's ideas about that. According to him it is common for a scholar like al-Zarnūjī to follow the footsteps of his *imām*, Abu Ḥanīfah, from whom he takes the idea of *shukr*. After all a Muslim is supposed to thank his God everytime regardless of whatever and how much amount he secures for that day. al-Ahwānī, op. cit., pp. 238-239. al-Zarnūjī, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

²³¹. al-Zarnūjī uses a wise saying in showing the importance of teaching children gradually. It is said that '*al-sabq ḥarf wa al-tikrār alf*' which suggests that a student should learn little but to repeat it many times so that he can master the subject. It is similar to saying that reading one book twice is better than reading two books once. al-Zarnūjī, *ibid.*, p. 135.

that is within the comprehension of the child²³². For him comprehending the subject is the most important thing in the learning process. Therefore, if books are compulsory in teaching one must start with a small book²³³. However, al-Zarnūjī does not specify a special method in teaching the Qur'ān. He leaves it to the teacher to utilize ideas and methods suggested by him. He also mentions other methods such as observation (*ta'ammul*), writing (*kitābah/ta'līq*), discussion (*mudhākarah*), debate (*munāẓarah*) and conversation (*muṭāraḥah*). For him discussion and debate are a type of meeting or consultation (*mushāwarah*) and this will end up with a good result. However, certain ethics must be observed, otherwise it will result in dismay and enmity between the parties. Last but not least, thanking God is very important at the end of the teaching and learning processes for it can add knowledge²³⁴.

Ibn Khaldūn is also sympathetic to the ability of children, a fact that seems to have been ignored by the teachers of his time. According to him the teachers of his time introduced the pupil at an early age to the difficult problems of knowledge and demanded that he should force his mind to find a solution for them, thinking that in this way they trained the child to study in the correct way. But they only muddled him by imparting the advanced stages of knowledge instead of beginning with elementary steps. Ibn Khaldūn

²³². *ibid.*, p. 136.

²³³. *ibid.*

²³⁴. *ibid.*, pp. 135-144.

believes that the child is generally unable to understand, unless the material is brought home to him in a simple way without detail and through tangible examples. If the final stages of knowledge are put before the child before the elementary, while he is still unfit to comprehend them, his mind will become exhausted, without doubt, because of the difficulty which he has to encounter. The child will thus lose his desire, become apathetic and will always entertain a distaste for knowledge. All this is the result of bad teaching²³⁵.

To ensure the simplicity of the elementary processes, he suggests that any subject taught should not be prolonged and presented in two different periods because it can cause forgetfulness. Similarly two subjects should not be studied at once, for that would result in distracting the attention of the child and in confusing him so that he will be unable to accomplish either subject²³⁶.

Regarding teaching the Qur'ān, he suggests that it should be given to the children in their early days. It is easier for them and it would be more influential in their later life. He then explains the methods adopted by the people of the West (*Ahl al-Maghrib*) who started educating their children with the Qur'ān and its related subjects such as the pattern of writing and issues related to it (*rasm wa masā'iluh*) and disputes about it amongst the scholars of

²³⁵. Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., pp. 589-590.

²³⁶. *ibid.*, p. 590

the Qur'ān (*ikhtilāf ḥamalat al-Qur'ān fīh*). They did not mix it with any other subjects, be it hadith, *fiqh*, poems or wise sayings (*kalām al-ʿArab*). Thus they were strong in Qur'ānic studies but weak in others. Some of them studied this until the age of puberty or further up until their early manhood²³⁷.

In contrast with the West, the people of al-Andalūs mixed other subjects taught to their children with the Qur'ān. Subjects taught together with the Qur'ān were writing, narration of poems, Arabic language and calligraphy (*khatt*), to the extent that calligraphy was given priority over the others. To them, these subjects were sufficient for them to face their future education²³⁸.

The Africans mixed Qur'ānic studies with hadith and related subjects. However, the Qur'ān was given priority. The People of the East (*ahl al-Mashriq*) mixed subjects taught to their children with the exception of calligraphy. It had its own class and special teacher²³⁹.

To Ibn Khaldūn, each and every regional method has strengths and weaknesses. These various methods were due to their differences in talents that arose from the teaching process²⁴⁰.

²³⁷. *ibid.*, p. 594.

²³⁸. *ibid.*, pp. 594-595.

²³⁹. *ibid.*, p. 595..

²⁴⁰. *ibid.*, pp 595-596.

However, he does not seem to be rigid in the application of his principles. He appreciates what Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī has suggested in his book, that the children should begin by learning Arabic and poetry and then proceed to learn arithmetic and finally the Qurʾān. It will be significantly easier for them to study the Qurʾān later. Ibn al-ʿArabī criticises methods of teaching which begin with Qurʾān- reading, which brings no benefit to the learner except its reading.

On this Ibn Khaldūn believes that Qurʾānic recitation and memorization has God's blessing and that advantage should be taken of the age of obedience and submission to make the child learn the Qurʾān. This means that to him the understanding of the Qurʾān is not that important at this stage. However, he considers the idea suggested by Ibn al-ʿArabī the ideal one provided that one can be sure that the child will remain willing to learn the Qurʾān when he gets older, and thinks that it should be adopted by both the people of the East and those of the West²⁴¹.

Ibn Khaldūn has rightly remarked that mental strain results from dealing with too difficult problems, and creates a danger of permanent distaste for knowledge. He thus seems to anticipate the modern pedagogical ideas that successful self-assertion especially in the case of the young, is the basic

²⁴¹. *ibid.*, p. 596.

condition for developing a taste for knowledge and a desire for further achievement. Nor can one pass over lightly his valuable observation in connection with the stages of development of the child. He points out the psychological fact that the stage of puberty is marked by a spirit of independence, while the preceding stage is characterized by obedience and submission and is therefore more suitable for memory and drill work.

2.7.2. Teaching Advanced students

Teaching, according to the Islamic point of view, is of two kinds; direct and indirect. The direct is what teachers transmit or instruct their students to do in their class or under their guidance. The indirect includes conversation, companionship and the force of example²⁴²; thus *riḥlah* is recommended to ensure companionship with different teachers beside the knowledge to be gained from them. This is only possible for an advanced student.

There is no clear-cut age for the stage of higher education. For Ibn Khaldūn, a student may spend at this stage between five and sixteen years²⁴³. Admission to the *madrasah* was not based on any particular selection. All those who were keen to learn would be enrolled as students. The

²⁴². Tritton, op. cit., p. 69.

²⁴³. Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., p. 479.

student had the privilege of selecting his favourite teacher²⁴⁴. In order to study under certain great scholars, students used to travel far and wide to meet the teachers and learn from their own mouths. Thus, *riḥlah fī ṭalab al-ʿilm* which was previously meant for receiving hadith from the mouth of the teacher is no longer for hadith alone but includes other subjects. As a result, the practice of undertaking a long journey in search of knowledge from a specific teacher became one of the signs of pursuing higher education. According to Ibn Khaldūn, it adds to the value of perfection in study to travel in quest of knowledge and to meet certain professors in person²⁴⁵.

In the higher education centre, the lesson started normally after the prayer which students performed along with the teacher²⁴⁶. The class began with the recitation of the Qurʾān by a *qāriʿ*, together with blessings on the Prophet and other religious formulae²⁴⁷. At the present time, the teacher himself recites the *basmalah*. Then the teacher read the pre-determined texts and gave his comments and explanation on the texts. Sometimes the teacher taught by dictation (*imlāʿ*), while others gave the explanation after the text had been read aloud by a reader²⁴⁸.

²⁴⁴. For example, Abū Ḥanīfah chose Ḥammād b. Sulaymān as his teacher after having a long thought and observation. al-Zarnūjī, op. cit., p. 100.

²⁴⁵. Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., p. 598.

²⁴⁶. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (1987) s.v. masjid, 5:363.

²⁴⁷. *ibid.*

²⁴⁸. *ibid.*

Ibn Khaldūn gives a detailed description of the proper and correct methodology of teaching. He criticises the practice of multiplication of summaries of the books (*mukhtaṣarāt al-kutub*) and commentaries because these abbreviations are insufficient and can bewilder the student²⁴⁹. Teaching has to be gradual and proportional to the student's power of understanding whether he be beginner or advanced. The subject must be studied thrice. It must undergo three courses and the student is led gradually into the subject, so that his powers of comprehension are not strained and he is fitted to assimilate further knowledge²⁵⁰. He is emphatic that one subject should be studied at one particular time²⁵¹. He suggests three steps that a teacher should undertake during the process of teaching. They are as follows;

- i. Selecting the basic principles (*uṣūl al-bāb*) of the subject and presenting them in the form of a general outline,
- ii. he should go over the subject once again in greater detail, explaining the difficulties and the different points of view. He no longer gives a summary but full commentaries and explanation,
- iii. he then goes back again for the third time and this time he leaves no difficulty and vague and obscure aspect untouched.

He further says that as a result, the student, when he finishes with the

²⁴⁹. Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., p. 588.

²⁵⁰. *ibid.*, p. 589.

²⁵¹. *ibid.*, p. 590.

discipline, has acquired the habit of it. This is, to his mind, the effective method of teaching as it requires threefold repetition. To him it will benefit all students. It does not harm those who could understand the subject within less than that²⁵².

Teaching and learning are twin processes. The main methods of learning are memorizing (*al-hifẓ*), understanding (*al-fahm/al-fiqh*) and discussion (*mudhākarah*)²⁵³.

2.8. Conclusion

Historically speaking, there is no clear-cut definition of the methodology of teaching in Islam. Though traditional ‘*ulamā*’ such as al-Shāfi‘ī, al-Qābisī, al-Ghazālī and Ibn Khaldūn utilized various methods during their teaching, none of them defined it precisely. However, from elements to be found in their writings modern scholars have managed to elaborate a precise definition. It is certain that the method of teaching is very important, since without it the learning process cannot take place. It is a bridge between a teacher and a student, and it also narrows the gap between them. Knowledge will not be imparted properly if no proper methodology is employed. It can be varied from generation to generation, from one place and society to another, from an experienced teacher to an inexperienced one, and from one subject to

²⁵². *ibid.*, pp. 589-590.

²⁵³. al-Zarnūjī, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140, and 148-149.

another. It can even be varied in the teaching of a lesson by an individual teacher. As far as the Qur'ān is concerned, it has its own objectives and message to be proclaimed to people. Ideas are presented in such a way as to suit everybody, hence the varieties of methods. All of them are general in nature, and due to this generality they are not bound by a specific time and place. Thus teaching is not merely based on verbal communication but will make use of audiovisual methods and other kinds of appropriate measures. 'Ulamā', after the decease of the Prophet, were highly mobile. Some of them were even settled outside the Arabian Peninsula. With the emergence of new problems in a different society, they were forced to adopt new methodology in their daily life as well as in diffusing knowledge, and hence, it varied. Some of them were even influenced by earlier civilizations, especially the ancient Greek philosophers. They managed to merge these various civilizations and emerged as the conquerors of the world in both material power and in knowledge. They left behind a large and invaluable heritage in the form of manuscripts. However, this great achievement was spoilt by an attitude of rigidity and barrenness of thought. People thus became more inclined to memorizing than to understanding and conducting experiments. They were afraid of discussing things that were not present in books.

CHAPTER THREE

Traditional Islamic Education: Its Influence on the Malays.

3.1. Introduction

This chapter will present an historical analysis of Islamic educational institutions beginning from the time of the Prophet through the Middle Ages with an emphasis on the *madrasah* of medieval Islam and in later time the *pondok*, as phenomena of change in the needs of the Malay educational scene. It is important to mention here that the advent of Islam in the Malay Archipelago was the starting point for these changes, especially in the Malays' worldview. The *pondok* education, apart from being the result of the coming of Islam, had contributed a great deal in leading people to the new pattern of life where the idea of the importance of knowledge took shape.

The role played by members of the society was crucial, so that houses of knowledgeable persons at one time turned into centres teaching the basic ideas of Islam. Later on, when the need for the knowledge became more widespread, *suraus* (prayer centres) and mosques took over their role as centres for education.

As a result, *pondok* education was established and played an important role in forming society for almost two centuries until recent times.

By the mid-1970's there were not many *pondok* institutions left and their development in the future depends on the support of state and national governments and the Muslim community at large, financially and morally¹.

3.2. The Arabs Before Islam.

The Arab society in which Islam was first revealed adhered to social and religious norms which were greatly at variance with the message brought by the Prophet and with the values of unfolding Islamic civilisation. One of the first tasks of Islam was to attempt to change the wild and uncouth life of the pagan Arabs, the *jāhiliyyah*, and to bring it into line with Islamic values. For this a form of education was necessary, and thus education has lain at the heart of Islam from the very earliest days.

Pre-Islamic Arab society was tribally organised, and there was no central authority which was able to create a state or enforce laws. Nevertheless daily life was based on norms which seemed to be acceptable in the eyes of most, and there was a system of religious beliefs which, though polytheistic, seems to have been acceptable to the majority.

In their way of life, these Arabs were broadly divided into two groups, the bedouin and the town-dwellers. Although the bedouin way of life varied

¹. Abdullah Alwi Haji Hassan, "The Development of Islamic Education in Kelantan", in *Tamadun Islam di Malaysia*, (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980), pp. 192 and 196.

from area to area, the typical bedouin were regarded as the Arabs of the desert, who led a nomadic, harsh and often violent life. The town-dwellers were more settled in their way of life, though they often undertook long trading journeys. Their most famous centres were Makkah, Madīnah (Yathrib) and Ṭā'if.

Regardless of which group they came from their practices were almost the same. Those who were rich or came from a noble family, or managed to rise to importance, were highly regarded and respected². Thus others struggled hard to achieve status and to gain high respect among their fellows. Since it was almost impossible to achieve the goal by purely personal effort almost all relied upon their tribes. Therefore, tribalism was observed by all pagan Arabs, be they sedentary town-dwellers or nomadic bedouin who moved from one place to another looking for the means of life.

With the passage of time tribalism was accepted as an institution and the pagan Arabs established sets of norms which became part of their laws and

². For example, Muḥammad and his wife Khadījah came from the tribe of Banū Hāshim, the most well known and respected family in Mecca at that time. They had been assigned to feed and serve drink to the pilgrims who came every year to Mecca to perform *Hajj* and to circumambulate the Ka'bah. They were also charged with looking after the Ka'bah and its surrounding. Abū Bakr came from the tribe of Banū Taym. 'Umar was from Banū 'Adī, 'Uthmān came from Banū Umayyah. 'Alī came from Banū Hāshim. Abū Sufyān, the father of Mu'āwiyah the founder and the first caliph of the Umayyad Dynasty came from Banū Umayyah, al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwām came from Banū Asad and so on so forth. In order to preserve their tribal dignity their members were married either to members of the same tribe or others of a highly respected tribe.

were accepted by the tribes³. Though the regulations were not in written form they were everywhere understood and the tribes had to abide by them. Thus tribalism became an institution.

A tribe was usually led by a leader called *shaykh*⁴. This leader was very powerful, exercised great power and influence and was obeyed by his people. The *shaykh* was selected by the people from amongst the most noble families, or was a respected figure or one of the richest among them.

They were not under one king and there was no systematic and well-organized government⁵. This situation frequently led them into inter-tribal wars. What is more they had a natural disposition to war, bloodshed, cruelty and rapine, and for certain tribes, robbery was considered a valuable source of profit. Robberies were very frequently committed by such people on

³. For instance, the concept of *al-tha'r* was accepted as a type of law in their society. This type of law was adopted later on by Islam with certain modifications and was given a new name as *al-qisās*. Another example is the punishment of theft. Cutting hands was observed and this punishment was also adopted by Islam in later days. Please refer to *Sūrat al-Mā'idah*(5) verse 45 for the former and verse 38 for the latter. In verse 45 we read, "And We prescribed for them therein: the life for the life and the eye for the eye, and the nose for the nose, and the ear for the ear, and the tooth for the tooth, and for wounds retaliation. But whoso forgoeth it (in the way of charity) it shall be expiation for him. Whoso judgeth not by that which Allah hath revealed, such are wrong-doers". In verse 38 we reads' "As for the thief, both male and female, cut off their hands. It is the reward of their own deeds, an exemplary punishment from Allah. Allah is Mighty, wise. See also Abū 'Abd Allah Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-'Arabī, 1968), 5:160.

⁴. William Muir, *The Life of Mahomet* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1894), p. lxxxii.

⁵. *ibid.*, essence from subtopic "Subdivision and independence of Arab tribes a formidable obstacle to union".

merchants and travellers⁶.

In describing the mentality of the Arabs before the coming of Islam, Jawād ʿAlī is of the opinion that,

They were an aggressive people who would attack and kill each other even on camel-caravans, rob, capture and enslave them. Then, they might sell them in the slave trade market or force them to become their servants⁷.

Other Arabs had settled in famous centres like Makkah, Madīnah (Yathrib) and Ṭāʾif. Many of these city-dwellers were merchants, having commerce with Syria to the north of the Arabian peninsula, and they made their journeys in camel-caravan. Though they had their own defects and vices, they had a very high regard for certain values and qualities, and they valued especially eloquence, expertness in the use of arms and horsemanship, hospitality, faithfulness, and respect to their kindred⁸.

They were very honest among themselves or towards those whom they considered friends. To a certain extent every thing in their camps was open

⁶. E. M. Wherry, *A Comprehensive Commentary on the Qurʾān*, (London: Trubner and Co., 1882), 1:57.

⁷. Jawād ʿAlī, *al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-ʿArab Qabl al-Islām*, (Beirut: Dār al-ʿilm li al-Malāyīn, 1976), 1:262.

⁸. Wherry, *op. cit.*, 1:51-56.

and nothing was ever known to be stolen⁹.

As regards their religion, the Arabs were idolaters and worshipped a great number of idols. It was reported that there were no less than three hundred and sixty idols, in and about the Ka'bah at Makkah¹⁰. In this regard, Muir makes a very apposite observation when he says;

The prospects of Arabia before the rise of Mahomet were as unfavourable to religious reform as to political or national regeneration. The foundation of Arab faith was a deep-rooted idolatry, which for centuries had stood proof, with no palpable symptom of decay, against every attempt at evangelisation from Egypt and Syria. Several causes increased the insensibility of Arabia to the Gospel¹¹.

The best picture of the Arab before the coming of Islam is nicely illustrated by the words attributed to Ja'far b. Abī Tālib, the spokesman of the Muslim emigrants in Abyssinia, to the Negus;

Jāhiliyyah people we are, worshipping idols, feeding on dead animals, practising immorality, deserting our families and violating the covenant terms of mutual protection, with the

⁹. *ibid.* p. 58.

¹⁰. al-Nawawī, *op. cit.*, 12:133.

¹¹. Muir, *op. cit.*, p.lxxxiii.

strong among us devouring the weak¹².

It was into this very chaotic society and situation that Muḥammad was sent in order to change their long-inherited way of life and to guide them back onto the track laid down in the Qur'ān.

3.3. Educational Institutions in Early Islam.

The Mosque was the oldest place of learning in Early Islam. Early studies stimulated by the birth of Islam were by their nature related to the mosque. The basic format of Islamic education in the mosque was laid down by the Prophet and his companions who used to sit around him listening to his exposition of the sacred texts and scriptures. The first and foremost term used to designate such an assembly was the *majlis*. A similar gathering was also known as the *ḥalaqah*¹³. Students would normally sit around the teacher in a circle. Hence, the *ḥalaqah* probably originated from the sitting arrangement of the class as the word *ḥalaqah* means circle.

According to this system, the teacher either stood or sat on a dais, cushion, or chair as he leaned against the wall or pillar. However, it was noted

¹². Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Mālik Ibn Hishām, *Sīrat al-Nabī*, (ed.) Muḥyī al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, (n.p.: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 1:358-359. Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs* (London: MacMillan and Co. Ltd., 1951), believes that this was an apocryphal saying put in the mouth of Jaʿfar b. Abū Ṭālib.

¹³. Munīr-ud-Dīn Ahmed, *Muslim Education and the Scholars Social Status*, (Zurich: Verlag, Der Islam, 1968), pp. 52-53 quoted by Omar, op. cit., p. 54. See also, Tibawi, *Islamic Education, Its Traditions and Modernization into the Arab National System*, (London: Luzac and Company Ltd., 1979), p. 48 (hereafter referred as *Islamic Education*).

that the students would form only semi-circle in front of the teacher, as it was improper to sit behind him.

Hence, it can be concluded that the *majlis* was principally a study circle (*ḥalaqah*) held in a mosque, which was also held later in private houses, bookshops and libraries.

These patterns of learning were dominant during the life of Muḥammad and later during the time of his companions. It was reported that Muḥammad used to sit in the mosque of Madīnah surrounded by his companions in the form of a *ḥalaqah*¹⁴ while he was instructing them by repeating his hadith three times until they memorised it¹⁵. The repetition was to make them understand the subject taught¹⁶. The Prophet would normally select appropriate times to give instruction and illuminate his lectures with good tidings in order to entertain the audience¹⁷. Leading companions including ʿAlī and Abū Dharr regularly attended these classes¹⁸. Sometimes the Prophet

¹⁴. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, op. cit., 1:188-189

¹⁵. ibid., 1:227-228; al-Nawawī, op. cit., 12:152, al-Ḥākim, op. cit., 3:91 and 178; Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, op. cit., p. 83; Ibn Jamāʿah al-Kinānī, *Tadhkirat al-Sāmiʿ wa al-Mutakallim fī Adab al-ʿĀlim wa al-Mutaʿallim*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1354H), p. 39; Ibn Qutaybah al-Dīnawarī, *Kitāb Taʾwīl Mukhtalaf al-Ḥadīth*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, n.d.), p. 45.

¹⁶. Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, op. cit., 1:227.

¹⁷. ibid.

¹⁸. al-Kandahlawī, *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah*, (Dimashq: Dār al-Qalam, 1969) 3:558-559 and 562.

inspected study circles in his mosque and if he found any fault, he immediately took steps to set it right¹⁹.

Perhaps a more organised form of learning during the Prophet's time was the school of *ahl al-Ṣuffah*. The *ṣuffah*, which literally means a raised platform or bench, was an enclosure connected to the mosque of the Prophet in Madinah. The room was provided to lodge the *muhājirūn* and those of the local people who were too poor to own a house²⁰. It was reported that *ahl al-ṣuffah* devoted themselves to acquiring knowledge, to worship and to living an ascetic life²¹. Muḥammad Ḥamīdullah is of the opinion that the *ṣuffah* was a regular residential school where reading, writing, Muslim law and the memorizing of chapters of sciences were taught under the direct supervision of the Prophet²². Thus, some of the characteristics of Islamic educational institutions were already shown by the practice of the *ṣuffah*. Even the Prophet himself was the teacher of the *ṣuffah*. He often visited them and found opportunity to sit with them, reminding them of religious and worldly matters and directing them to recite and study the Qur'ān²³.

¹⁹. Hamidullah, op. cit., p. 55.

²⁰. al-Kandahlawī, op. cit., 3:562.

²¹. Akram D. al-'Umari, *Madinan Society at the Time of the Prophet*, (tr.) Huda Khattab, (Herndon: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 1991), 1: 90.

²². Hamidullah, op. cit., p. 54.

²³. Anees and Athar, op. cit., p. 56.

The mosque which contained within itself such a study circle played a leading role as the first educational institution in Islam. This tradition set the pattern for educational instruction during the subsequent centuries. Therefore, the kind of knowledge that was taught during this period was largely religious, mainly the Qur'ān and the subjects related in one way or another to the study of this sacred book, such as understanding its injunctions and memorizing its verses²⁴.

Another form of educational institution that emerged during the first century of the Hijrah was the *kuttāb*. As opposed to the *majlis*, the *kuttāb* was the place for teaching children. Its motive was to provide a means of literacy along with simple arithmetic, poetry and history. Ignaz Goldziher is of the opinion that this system was started during the time of the Prophet and established during that of the Umayyads²⁵. Shalaby is of the same opinion except that he divides the system into two categories. The first category, which was established during the Prophet's time, was merely meant to teach children reading and writing. The second type which includes the teaching of the Qur'ān and other elementary subjects developed much later²⁶.

²⁴. Ahmad Von Denffer, *‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān*, (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 1983), pp. 31-34.

²⁵. James Hastings, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912) Vol. 5, s.v. "Education (Muslim)", by Ignaz Goldziher.

²⁶. Ahmad Shalaby, *History of Muslim Education*, (Beirut: Dar al-Kashshaf, 1954), p. 19.

These reports lead us to the conclusion that concern with the educating of Muslim children started at a very early stage of Islam alongside the development of adult education. Further development of the *kuttāb* was mainly the result of the activities in new Islamic cities. After this period, it became the most widespread institution of elementary education in the Muslim World²⁷. It should be noted that the studies of the *kuttāb* led to a level of higher education as offered by the mosque and *madrasah*²⁸.

After the death of the Prophet, Islam was gradually spread to different parts of the world. Hence, Muslims were scattered, among them the great companions of the Prophet and later on the successors and their successors and so on. The practice of Islamic education and its institutional form experienced great impetus from the new contacts they had, especially with the traditional education of the neighbouring countries of Persia and Byzantium. The *futūḥāt* or expansion of the Islamic state brought three important developments with a far reaching influence on the Islamic educational system. They are:

a. Ideas and opinions on *fiqh* matters which varied among the companions and their successors because their knowledge about the Qur'ān and hadith were not at the same level.

b. The expansion of the Islamic state (*futūḥāt*) brought forth many new

²⁷. C. E. Bosworth et. al. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 5, s.v. "Kuttab" by J. M. Landau.

²⁸. Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1977), 2:442.

problems that they had never experienced before and which needed new solutions.

c. Sometimes, the Qur'ān and hadith of the Prophet are silent over certain cases and issues. This led them to use their own *ijtihād* or the use of their reason to analyse and deduce the outcome from the conditions (*qaḍāyā*) given. It happened that sometimes, they consulted among each other and acted on the basis of consensus emerging from the consultation²⁹.

These three situations later had a very great significance for the pursuit of knowledge because the outcomes of their *ijtihād* or consensus among them needed to be dealt with with great care and very systematically. This led to the birth of the science of jurisprudence. Later this became the most significant factor behind the establishment of the *madrasah*³⁰.

The growth of the Muslim community was also accompanied by a rise in the number of mosques throughout the new territories. More and more mosques of different size were built. This phenomenon necessitated the

²⁹. This is probably what the Prophet expected from Mu'ādh b. Jabal when he first sent him to Yaman. Before Mu'ādh left for Yaman he was asked by the Prophet how he would deal with problems when he was confronted with them. He told the Prophet that he would refer to the book of Allah which is the Qur'ān. If he failed to find the solution from the Qur'ān he would turn to the Sunnah of the Prophet. If he could not find anything clearly mentioned in either of them he would make *ijtihād*, that is he would use his own reasoning power to extrapolate and deduce. See Ibn Tallāḥ, *Aqḍiyat Rasūl Allāh*, (ed.) Muḥammad Ḍiyā' al-Raḥmān al-A'ẓamī, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Lubnānī, 1982), p. 27.

³⁰. Joan. E. Gilbert, "Institutionalization of Muslim Scholarship and Professionalization of the 'Ulama in Medieval Damascus," *SI*, 52 (1980), p. 114.

classification of mosques into two types:

- a. a mosque where the five daily prayers were held, and
- b. a place for the congregational or *Jum'ah* prayers were performed. This type of mosque was called *jāmi'*³¹.

The city of Baghdad for instance, had some six *jāmi'*s and three thousand mosques in the middle of the fifth century A.H.³².

Ḥalaqāt were held in both types of mosque. al-Shāfi'ī used to teach various subjects in the *Jāmi'* of 'Amr in Egypt and when the mosque of Ibn Ṭulūn was founded, one of his pupils later lectured on the subject of hadith in it³³. One of its *ḥalaqāt* was named after al-Shāfi'ī when he taught there and the *majlis* continued to bear his name long after his death³⁴.

Mosques continued to be used as places for teaching well into the third/ninth century. The subjects were also expanded beyond the study of

³¹. 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, the second caliph, wrote a letter to his governors, Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī in Baṣrah and Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ in Kūfah explaining to them the roles of mosques. The mosque where people had their *Jum'ah* prayer was named *jāmi'*, even though it was small. See 'Alī Muḥammad Mukhtār, *Dawr al-Masjid fī al-Islām*, (Makkah: Rābi'ah al-'Ālam al-Islāmī, 1402H), p. 7, quoting al-Ṣuyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-Muḥaḍḍarah*, 6:149.

³². Munir D. Ahmed, "Muslim Education Prior to the Establishment of Madrasah", *IS*, 26, no. 4 (1987), p. 322.

³³. *EI*, vol. 5, s.v. "madrasa."

³⁴. Ahmed, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

scriptural texts to include subjects such as philology and grammar³⁵ as well as intellectual sciences such as chemistry, arithmetic, algebra and geometry³⁶.

The turning point in the use of the mosque as the seat of learning came after the *miḥnah* (great inquisition) which began in the last year of al-Ma'mūn's caliphate (833) and continued under the three caliphs, al-Mu'taṣim (842), al-Wāthiq (847) and al-Mutawakkil (861)³⁷. This period represented a great influx of ideas from classical antiquity (to a lesser extent, from ancient Persia and India as well), which stimulated a burst of intellectual activity which was epitomized in the establishment of Dār al-Ḥikmah. These currents affected juristic thinking which at that time was beginning to grow and mature into a full discipline³⁸. As a result, an unprecedented number of mosques were founded for legal studies serving as platforms for the jurists to explicate their methodological principles and to justify them against critiques by their counterparts³⁹.

The students, therefore, needed to stay close to the mosque and the

³⁵. Anees and Athar, op. cit., p. 62.

³⁶. Tibawi, *Islamic Education*, p. 49.

³⁷. H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramer, eds. *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961), s.v. "Miḥna"

³⁸. N. J. Coulson, *Conflicts and Tensions in Islamic Jurisprudence*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1969), p. 22.

³⁹. *EI*, vol. 6, s.v. "Masdjid".

teacher with whom they chose to study. Since the mosque could not serve as a lodging place for teaching staff and students, an additional building was necessary for their accomodation. This additional building was known as a *khān*⁴⁰.

We see that the transition of Islamic educational institutions from a simple *ḥalaqah* to the growth of *masjid-khan* complexes was due to the need for the systematization of Islamic law. This process finally culminated towards the end of the fourth century of Islam in the establishment of the *madrasah*. The *madrasah* was therefore, a natural development of two previous institutions; the mosque, in its role as a college of law and its nearby *khān*, as an accomodation for the students. In spite of the evolution of the *madrasah*, for a long time there was much overlapping of mosque and *madrasah*⁴¹. Even after the appearance of the *madrasah* and other educational institutions, this phenomenon did not hinder the mosque from its educational function.

3.4. The *Madrasah*

The *madrasah* was popularized during the time of Niẓām al-Mulk, a powerful *wazīr* of the Saljuq Sultans Alp Arslān and Malik Shāh (456-485/1063-1092). He is widely regarded as the founder of the *madrasah*⁴².

⁴⁰. Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges*, p. 23.

⁴¹. Makdisi, *Rise of Humanism*, p. 24.

⁴². Anees and Athar, op. cit., p. 63. See al *EI*, Vol. 5, s.v. "madrasa", p. 1126.

However, some scholars deny this, noting that *madāris* were already existent before the time of Niẓām al-Mulk⁴³. Accepting the fact that regarding the *madrasah* as a result of an individual endeavour would deny its natural development over the last four centuries, as we have seen, Niẓām al-Mulk deserves some credit for his endeavour in establishing his first two *madāris* in Baghdad and Naysābūr. Indeed the type of *madrasah* evolved by Niẓām al-Mulk prevailed in his time and immediately afterward. It was widespread in Iraq, Khurāsān and Jazīrah⁴⁴. There were also Niẓāmiyyah Madrasahs in Balkh, Mawṣil, Harāt and Marw⁴⁵.

It is believed that the establishment of the Niẓāmiyyah Madrasah was intended to promote the ideas of the Sunni dogmatic theological movement associated with the Shāfiʿite school of law and known by the name of Ashʿarism⁴⁶. It attempted to synthesize elements of both the liberal and conservative approaches to Islamic law and to consolidate both reason and faith as a balanced means of interpreting the law. It rejected the extremes of the other factions such as the Muʿtazilites and took a middle ground on

⁴³. *EL*, vol. 5, s.v. "madrasa", p. 1126

⁴⁴. Shalaby, *op. cit.*, p. 58; *EL*, Vol. 5, s.v. "madrasa", p. 1127.

⁴⁵. *EL*, vol. 5, s.v. "Madrasa", p. 1127.

⁴⁶. G. Makdisi, "Muslim Institutions of Learning in Eleventh-Century Baghdad", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 24 (1961), p. 2-3.

religious questions⁴⁷. By doing this Niẓām al-Mulk managed to popularize the Ashʿarite views and champion the Shāfiʿite school throughout his realm. In fact, the first Niẓāmiyyah Madrasah in Baghdad, the most famous of the group, was founded in 459/1067 for the celebrated Shāfiʿī teacher of jurisprudence Abū Ishāq al-Shīrāzī⁴⁸. Later, its most important teaching post was held by the famous al-Ghazālī⁴⁹. The *madrasah* was henceforth extended, with some modifications, to other parts of Islamic world⁵⁰.

Some writers relate the *Wazīr*'s action in establishing the *madrasah* to the idea of competing with and surpassing the Shiʿites' Dār al-ʿIlm and the famous al-Azhar as well as to providing counter propaganda against Shiʿites in general⁵¹. This idea is not basically correct since Sunni educational institutions were in existence prior to this, though not in the form of the *madrasah* proper. Taking into account the status of Niẓām al-Mulk as an administrator, the *madrasah* was an essential part of his responsibilities as a centre to train his assistants in the religious field as well as in administrative matters, for

⁴⁷. *ibid.*, p. 3, quoting Ignaz Goldziher's *Le dogme et la loi de l'Islam: Histoire du développement dogmatique et juridique de la religion musulmane* (Paris, P. Geuthner, 1920), p. 98.

⁴⁸. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Science and Civilization in Islam*, (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1987) p. 71.

⁴⁹. *ibid.*

⁵⁰. *ibid.*

⁵¹. Gary Leiser, "Notes on the *Madrasa* in Medieval Islamic Society", *MW*, Vol. 86, No. 1, (1986), p. 18; See also *EI*, Vol. 5, s.v. "madrasa", p. 1126..

example *muftī* and *imām* and judges and ministers respectively⁵².

The *waqf* (endowment) played a very significant role in the reinforcement of Nizāmiyyah *madrasahs*. A person who established an endowment for a college or other institution had the right to attach any conditions or stipulations he wished regarding its use. Such conditions and stipulations were legally binding in perpetuity⁵³. Thus the endower (*wāqif*) was given a great power to control the smooth running of the *madrasah*. Anything linked to the *madrasah* would be determined by him, be it administration, instruction, appointment, staffs' salaries, maintenance and so on without any intervention from anybody else including the caliph⁵⁴.

Besides the Nizāmiyyah, there were many other *madrasahs* founded either as an extension of or in rivalry to them. Nizām al-Mulk's great rival Tāj al-Mulk (d. 485/1093) founded a Tājiyyah Madrasah in Baghdad⁵⁵. Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad, a descendant of the famous 'Imād al-Dīn Zankī, disliked the Shāfi'is, so that when he became ruler in Sinjār, in northwest Iraq (1197), he built a *madrasah* for the Ḥanafīs and stipulated that the overseer, and even the

⁵². al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfi'iyyah al-Kubrā*, vol 3, (Cairo, 1324H), p. 89, cited by Tibawi in his "Origin and Character of *al-Madrasah*", p. 236.

⁵³. Gary Leiser, op. cit., p. 19.

⁵⁴. *ibid.*

⁵⁵. EI., vol. 5. s.v. "Madrasa", p. 1127.

doorman and janitor had to be Ḥanafīs⁵⁶. In 631/1234 the caliph al-Mustanşir founded the Mustanşiriyyah Madrasah with a more liberal trend. This *madrasah* provided equally for the teachings of all four Sunni legal schools, in order to ensure intellectual unity among the scholars. A library, baths, a hospital and kitchens were also attached to the *madrasah*⁵⁷. Şalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī introduced the *madrasah* to Egypt⁵⁸ and Jerusalem, and the Almohads, at about the same period, built *madāris* in North Africa⁵⁹.

The wide dissemination of *madrasahs* with their religious, educational and social significance surpassed that of other Islamic institutions such as *khānqāh*, *ribāṭ* and *zāwiyah*⁶⁰. Nevertheless, the roles of these Şūfi institutions should not be underestimated at all. Their concerns were rather with cultivating an internal, spiritual life and its particular sort of knowledge. Whatever lesser number of functions these institutions may have performed, they were not less important, for they helped to develop sufism into a spiritual force in the Middle Ages. It is worthy to note here that these *khānqāh*, *ribāṭ* and

⁵⁶. Leiser, op. cit., p. 19.

⁵⁷. EI, vol.5, s.v. "Madrasa", p. 1127. In my opinion none of the modern colleges or universities could match the architectural aspects of this *madrasah* and facilities provided for the students of *al-ilm*. For the detailed description of this *madrasah*, please see Nakosteen, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

⁵⁸. Leiser, op. cit., p. 18-19; EI, Vol. 5, s.v. "madrasa", p. 1127.

⁵⁹. Nasr, op. cit., p. 71.

⁶⁰. They were overshadowed by *madrasahs* to the extent that people are confused over their nature. See Donald P. Little, "The nature of Khanqahs, Ribats and Zawiyas under the Mamluks", in Wael B. Hallaq and Donald P. Little, *Islamic Studies Presented to Charles J. Adams*, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1991), pp. 91-95.

Zāwiyah, though laying more emphasis on the spiritual life, were not solely for teaching sufism. Other subjects like hadith, *fiqh* and others were taught as well⁶¹. All in all, if the *madrasah* consolidated Islamic orthodoxy, these pious institutions appear to have contributed to the spread of Islam in the East and the West. The Malay Archipelago and especially the Malay Peninsula are one of the areas where these patterns of institutions made contact and left a great impact on the life of their people in those days.

3.5. The Coming of Islam and its Dissemination in the Malay Peninsula.

Muḥammad and his followers had striven for the cause of Islam in order to change the life of the Arabs and all of mankind and to disseminate and extend this message to the entire world, and in due course Islam was spread in every direction. By the twelfth century this religion had established a firm foothold in the Malay Peninsula.

The correct date of the coming of Islam to the Malay Peninsula is still a subject of dispute among scholars and historians. Some of them are of the opinion that it reached this region in as early as the eleventh century or even earlier than that. Some hold to the idea that it came during the thirteenth century. They disagree not only on the date but also about the bearers or agents of Islam, and whether the effort was first made by the Arabs, the

⁶¹. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf lectured in a *ribāṭ* in Baghdad on *uṣūl*, hadith etc. while instruction on Shāfi‘ī’s *fiqh* was given in *Ribāṭ al-Āthār* in 8/14 cent. According to Ibn Baṭṭūta, the Persians called *zāwiyah* the *madrasah*. See EI, Vol. 5, s.v. "madrasa", p. 1129.

Indians or others. Apart from that, they differ in their theories about the nature of the bearers, i.e. whether they were sufis, traders, warriors, preachers or others⁶².

There are several theories and opinions regarding the coming of Islam to the Malay Archipelago⁶³. These theories centre around three main questions, namely;

- i. When did Islam come to this region,
- ii. From where did Islam arrive, and
- iii. How did Islam reach the region?⁶⁴.

Many of the popular and well-known scholars who write on this topic

⁶². A very remarkable discussion of this issue is undertaken by Professor S. M. N. al-Attas in his book entitled, *Preliminary Statement on A General Theory of The Islamization of The Malay-Indonesian Archipelago*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1969) (hereafter cited as *Preliminary Statement*). An earlier but highly influential treatment of this subject is contained in S. Q. Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia* (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Ltd., 1963). See also Shafie bin Abu Bakar, "Institusi Shaykh 'Abdul-Malik Bin 'Abdullah (Satu Corak Pengajian Tradisi di Trengganu) Dan Kitab-Kitab Padanya", M. Litt., National University of Malaysia, 1977, chapter 1 (hereafter referred as "Institusi Shaykh 'Abdul-Malik").

⁶³. The Malay Archipelago comprises lands that generally fall within the area of Maphilindo (Malaysia, Philippine and Indonesia). However, in discussing the theories of the arrival of Islam, people usually limit it to the Malay Peninsula and Indonesia only. See al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement*, p. 2. Fatimi, op. cit., p. 3.

⁶⁴. Fatimi, op. cit., p. 3. Note that the word "Malaysia" in Professor Fatimi's writing refers to the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago and not to the present country which is named Malaysia. This could be inferred from page 3 when he writes, "Before proceeding further, I must add one word of explanation. As Dr. de Jong has very rightly said: "The coming of Islam to Malaya was part of a vaster movement, the penetration of Islam into the world of South East Asia. The conversion of the Malays of the peninsula to the new religion must be seen in this wider context; in particular, Islam in Malaya has to be seen in connection with happenings in Sumatra and Java." For this reason, it is unavoidable that this work, originally intended to be on *The Coming of Islam To Malaya*, had to be on *The Coming of Islam to Malaya and the Neighbouring Islands* i.e. to Malaysia.

are of the view that Islam was brought to this archipelago by sufis or merchants who came from either Arabia, Persia or India. To name a few, these include S. M. Naquib al-Attas⁶⁵, R. A. Blasdell⁶⁶, Cesar Adib Majul⁶⁷, S. Q. Fatimi⁶⁸ and Abdullah Ishak⁶⁹. There is no unanimity on other questions, to the extent that J. C. Van Leur, in his book, *Indonesian Trade and Society*, 1955, has stressed that "whoever approaches the history of Indonesia enters into an unknown world"⁷⁰. Similarly, S. Q. Fatimi, describing difficulties faced by him and his group in solving the above questions in the Malay Peninsula, quotes the Qur'ān, *Sūrat al-Nūr* (24):40⁷¹ which we may think is something of an overstatement. However, he is content to say that China seems to be the source of the coming of Islam to the Malay Archipelago, via Champa and

⁶⁵. al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement*, p. 5. Another book written by him is *Islam Dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu* (Petaling Jaya: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), 1990) (hereafter referred as *Islam Dalam Sejarah*).

⁶⁶. R. A. Blasdell, "How Islam Came to the Malay Peninsula," in *Muslim World*, April 1942, PP. 114-121.

⁶⁷. Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, (Quezon City: The University of Philippines Press, 1973). His earlier article the "Theories on the introduction and Expansion of Islam in Malaysia", *International Association of Historians of Asia, 2nd Biennial Conference Proceedings*, Oct. 1962, Taiwan, is considered by Paul Coatalen the best article on the coming of Islam to Southeast Asia. See Paul Coatalen, "The Coming of Islam to S.E. Asia: A Critical Review of Some Extant Theories", *Islamic Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3 & 4, 1981, p. 101.

⁶⁸. Fatimi, op. cit., see note 62.

⁶⁹. Abdullah Ishak, *Islam di Nusantara (Khususnya di Tanah Melayu)*, (Kuala Lumpur: BHEIS Jabatan Perdana Menteri, 1992).

⁷⁰. Fatimi, op. cit., p. 1.

⁷¹. "As darkness on a vast, abysmal sea. There covereth him a wave, above which is a wave, above which is a cloud. Layer upon layer of darkness." (This is M. M. Pickthall's translation. Fatimi used A. Yusuf Ali's translation which I think is less satisfactory).

following the east coast of the Malay peninsula to east Java⁷². So according to him the agents of the coming of Islam to the Peninsula were Indian (i.e. Indo Pakistani), Arabian (i.e. Arabo-Persian), and, above all, Chinese contributions in the early phases⁷³. Later works which have been produced by other scholars have proved that the issues are not that vague. For instance al-Attas is satisfied with his theory since his continuous research on that particular matter has ensured that his theory is the most acceptable one nowadays⁷⁴.

Whatever disputes the scholars have on the above-mentioned issues, the answers do not lie outside the idea that Islam was brought to this region by sufis or traders either from Arabia, Persia, India or China⁷⁵.

There is near-agreement among them that mass conversion of the population in the region started to take place towards the end of the thirteenth

⁷². Coatalen, op. cit., p. 103.

⁷³. Fatimi, op. cit., p. 36.

⁷⁴. According to him, Islam came to the Archipelago couched in Şūfī metaphysics. It was through *taṣawwuf* that the highly intellectual and rationalistic religious spirit entered the receptive minds of the people, effecting a rise of rationalism and intellectualism not manifested in pre-Islamic times. al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement*, p. 5. Other supporters of this idea are Hamka, Haji Abu Bakar Aceh, S. Ibrahim Buchari, Agus Salim and Cesar Adib Majul.

⁷⁵. According to Abdullah Ishak, Prof. al-Attas is the champion of the idea that Islam came from Arabia and Persia brought by Sufis. Snouck Hurgronje holds to the idea that Islam came from India and Prof. Fatimi is the leader of those people who believe that Islam first came from China via the east coast of the Malay Peninsula, for example Terengganu and Kelantan. See Abdullah Ishak, *Islam di Nusantara*, pp. 55-70.

century⁷⁶. The Islamization process has transformed the cultural, social and political thought of the Malays⁷⁷. Prior to this mass conversion to Islam the people of this region were either animists, Hindu, Buddhist, or followed a mixture of animism with either Hinduism and Buddhism.

With the coming of Islam the power of rationalism and intellectualism entered the receptive minds of the people. This is the powerful spirit that set in motion the process of revolutionizing the Malays' world view, turning it away from a crumbling world of mythology⁷⁸.

3.6. Traditional Islamic Education in the Malay Peninsula.

As mentioned above, Islamic education had been an integral and essential part of Islam from the earliest days, and this was equally the case in the Malay Archipelago after the mass conversion to Islam. This brought about an atmosphere in which knowledge was considered important, in the sense that it was the only power that could change people's lives from the bad to the good⁷⁹.

⁷⁶. Syed Farid Alatas, "Notes on Various Theories Regarding the Islamization of the Malay Archipelago," in *MW*, Oct 1985, p. 162.

⁷⁷. Muḥammad ʿUthmān el-Muḥammady, *Memahami Islam: Insan, Ilmu dan Kebudayaan* (Kota Baru: Pustaka Aman Press, 1982), p. 190. See also Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, *Islam Dalam Sejarah Asia Tenggara Tradisional* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Pena Sd. Bhd., 1989), chapters 9, 10 dan 11.

⁷⁸. al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement*, p. 5.

⁷⁹. *Sūrat al-ʿAlaq*(96):1-5.

With the coming of Islam the Muslims had acquired a new spiritual dimension and thereafter they experienced a new pattern of life. This phenomenon continues to characterise Malay society to the present day. Islam brought them into touch with a whole new world view, culture, political ideas and so on⁸⁰. However, myths and superstitions, based generally on Hinduism, are still practiced even though they may conflict with Islamic teachings such as offering *nasi kunyit* (yellow rice) to ghostly spirits etc.

When these preachers of Islam came to the Peninsula, regardless of whether they came from Arabia, Persia, India or China, they tried to be as close as possible not only to the courts of kings⁸¹, but also to the people in general. Discussing this, Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas says;

this could be evidenced by the fact that not all philosophical treatises were written solely for the pleasure of the kings. On the contrary, very few such treatises were written for the courts⁸².

He further argues that,

The existence of numerous copies of treatises on metaphysical topics expounding a cosmology and ontology that can be traced

⁸⁰. Another important effect of the coming of Islam in this society is the spread of the Malay language as a vehicle, not only for epic, romantic literature, but even more so for philosophical discourse. al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement*, p. 6.

⁸¹. Hindus and Buddhists when they first came to the Malay Archipelago tried to please kings, and treatises were written for the pleasure of the kings. *ibid.*

⁸². *ibid.*

back to the well-known 'classical' Sufis, *Mutakallimun*, Logicians and philosophers of Islam, and further back to Plotinus, Aristotle and Plato demonstrates that Islamic-Malay literature was neither the preserve of the courts nor determined by their values, but was more democratic than the past literature in the selection of its audience and readers. As late as the 13th/19th century, works by famous Muslim mystics such as Ibnu'l-^ʿArabī, Ibnu Raslan of Damascus and others were still being copied in the Malay language⁸³.

Apart from teaching Islam to the masses, they made an effort to translate books dealing with the basic tenets of Islam, which touched on five pillars of Islam, the principles of *Īmān*, the manners of performing prayers and other rituals, and so on.

With the coming of Islam to the Malay Peninsula in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, Islamic studies began⁸⁴. The earliest evidence which shows that Islam had arrived and penetrated into the heart of the Malay people is the discovery of a 'stone inscription' dated 702H⁸⁵ at Kuala Berang

⁸³. *ibid.*

⁸⁴. This is based on the discussion as to when Islam arrived in the Malay Peninsula. Refer also to the discussion made by Haji Buyung Adil in the following note.

⁸⁵. al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement*, p. 12. See also another book written by the same writer, *The Correct Date of the Terengganu Inscription*, (Kuala Lumpur: Muzium Negara, 1970), p. 1-5. See also Fatimi, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61. Tuan Haji Buyung Adil, a prominent writer who could be considered among the senior writers in Malaysia analyses the date of the inscription in *Sejarah Terengganu*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1982), pp. 9-10. The date inscribed was the month of "Rejab 702 Hijriyyah". According to him "if the lunar year is 702 it was in equivalence with 1303 AD. Should any other number be taken into account other than 702, it could be any one of this series; 708, 712, 720 to 729 and 780 to 789 [(since number 8 was pronounced as dua lapan (two eight)) or delapan]. It is impossible that the number goes beyond that. The month of Rejab was in equivalence with February. Thus, it was February 1303. The year 789 Hijriyyah therefore, is equivalent with 1387. Based on this analysis we could deduce our result here that the stone was inscribed in Rejab 702/ February 1303 or others in the series mentioned but it could not go beyond Rejab 789/ February 1387".

in the state of Terengganu which is on the northeast coast of the Malay Peninsula. It shows that Muslims had settled in this region and the settlement must have been in existence long before the stone was inscribed by one of them.

On this basis, it is clear that Islam already existed in Terengganu in the late thirteenth century or early in the fourteenth century. This was more or less one hundred years before its arrival in Malacca. However, al-Attas argued that this does not show that the Islamization happened in mass or that, in other words, subjects were not given the blessing by their rulers. Thus he insists that the first Muslim Malay kingdom in the Malay Peninsula was Malacca⁸⁶. This conversion was about 1409 AD⁸⁷. It was followed by Kedah in 1474 AD⁸⁸ through missionary effort. It was Malacca that had always been an important centre for the dissemination of Islam to Java and farther east. For instance, in 1475, Sharif Muhammad Kabungsuan, a *sayyid* who had married a Malaccan princess, went from there to Mindanao in the Philipinnes where he introduced Islam. Malay and Arab missionaries from Sumatra and Malacca who used to sail to the Moluccas, also took part in the Islamization of Macassar in Celebes (1505)⁸⁹. Nothing much is known of how the rest of the Peninsula was

⁸⁶. al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement*, p. 15.

⁸⁷. Haji Buyung Adil, *Sejarah Melaka Dalam Zaman Kerajaan Melayu*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1973), p. 11.

⁸⁸. al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement*, p. 15.

⁸⁹. *ibid.*

Islamized, but there are indications pointing to missionary activities centred at Malacca and Pasai⁹⁰.

al-Attas maintains that the process of teaching Islam to the society was carried out by Arab merchants. He looks at it from the aspect of language in the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago, where the Islamized Malay language came to predominate, for it would be there that the revolutionary changes in world view effecting other changes would be preserved and reflected; for language is the silent yet an ever-present living witness whose words and vocabulary still hold captive the thoughts and feelings of centuries⁹¹. Historically speaking, he says, we can say that the language used as well as the content of the teachings, the interpretation of *‘aqīdah* and various schools of *ṭaṣawwuf* in the early days of Islam in the Malay Peninsula, the pattern of Jawi literature and its letters, the names of days, the methods of memorizing the Qur’ān and other important things, obviously indicate Arab characteristics and all this shows us that Arabs and Persians were the first sources of the teachings in this region, though some of them might have come via India or China or other parts of the world⁹².

3.7. Divisions of Traditional Islamic Education

⁹⁰. *ibid.*

⁹¹. *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁹². al-Attas, *Islam Dalam Sejarah*, pp. 34-35.

In terms of implementation and methods of teaching, Islamic education could be divided into two categories namely; informal and formal (see link between the two categories in Appendix A).

3.7.1. Informal Education

i. Home-Based

In the Malay Peninsula, this informal Islamic education was home-based. It was left to parents as to how to educate their children⁹³. It was in his family that a child was brought up. Good parents went a long way with their religious-based education, while others would have relied on what they thought most beneficial to their children.

Those parents who could not impart knowledge themselves might have sent their children to their knowledgeable neighbour or else to prayer centres (*musallas* or *suraus*) or mosques.

Those who took on the responsibility of educating their children in their own houses would expose their children to Islamic education via actions or

⁹³. There is a tradition which mentions the importance of parents in bringing up their children. The Prophet says, "*kull mawlūd yūlad ʿala al-fiṭrah, fa abawāh yuhawwidānih aw yunaṣṣirānih aw yumajjīsānih*" which means, "each and every new born child is (pure) in nature, it is his parents who lead it to be either a Jew, a Christian or a Magian." al-Nawawī, 16:207; Ibn Qutaybah al-Dīnawarī, op. cit., p. 87. See also the discussion made by ʿAbdullāh in his book *Educational Theory: A Qurʾānic Outlook*, chapter 2 and chapter six p. 170.

sayings that show the greatness of God and their hopes in Him. It was usually started from the very beginning of the child's life. Some of them composed religious sayings in a very poetic manner whereas some others went further to compose very nice lyrics that made the children so happy that they would ask their parents to repeat them until they fell into a deep slumber.

Words praising God and the Prophet Muhammad were among the most popular, especially with mothers, who sang them whenever they had the opportunity. These words had a very attractive lyric, rhyme and rhythm such as the following;

1. *Lā ilāha illa'l Lāh,*
al-Maliku'l-Ḥaqqu'l-Mubīn
Muḥammad Rasūlu'l Lāh,
al-Ṣadiqu'l-wa'adu'l-Amīn.
2. *Ḥasbī rabbī Jalla'l Lāh,*
mā fī qalbī ghayru'l Lāh,
Nur Muḥammad Ṣalla'l Lāh.

To encourage children to learn the Qur'ān, or at least its recitation, parents used to sing the following song to them;

3. *Allāhumma'rḥamnī bi'l-Qur'ān,*
wa'j' alhu lī imāman wa nūran wa hūdan wa raḥmah,
Allāhumma dhakkirnī minhu mā nasītu,
wa 'allimnī, 'allimnī, minhu mā jahiltu,

wa'rzuqnī tilāwatahū ānā' al-layl, al-layl,
wa ānā' al-nahār,
*wa'j'ālu lī ḥujjatan*⁹⁴.

Others are in the Malay language such as;

4. *Buai tinggi-tinggi,*
sampai cucur atap,
belum tumbuh gigi,
sudah pandai baca kitab,
which means;
Push the swing high,
till it reaches edge of roof,
before teeth grow high,
able to read books.
5. *Anak rusa nani,*
baru kembang ekor,
apa dosa kami,
lalu tidak tegur.
which means;
Young nani mousedeer,
just grown the tail,
what sin committed oh dear,

⁹⁴. This transliteration is based not on international norms but on the Malay pronunciation, whose rhythm is intended to facilitate its singing.

till no words entailed.

6. *Puji itu bagi Allah yang tertunggal,
yang tiada ada bagiNya tu mithal.*

*Yang...dll.*⁹⁵

which means;

Praise be to God, the One and Only,

there is none comparable unto Him.

Who is...etc.

There are many others either in Malay or in Arabic sung by mothers to their children. The aims of singing, apart from easing and comforting them from distress, was to get them used to the wordings which were considered educational. It is notable that the words such as *kitab* (book), *dosa* (sin), *tidak tegur* (no words), *puji* (praise) and *tertunggal* (the One and Only) and last but not least *tiada mithal* (none comparable), all refer to the basic teachings of Islam.

The word *kitab* represented the idea of encouraging a child to learn and to struggle in pursuit of knowledge. It was probably based on the first five

⁹⁵. Information from Hajjah Wan Safiah Haji Wan Embong on the 20th May 1993. Haji Wan Embong was an important aide to one of the famous 'Ulama' in Terengganu, Syed Abdul Rahman b. Syed Muhammad al-'Idrus known as Tok Ku Paloh (1236/1817-1917).

verses revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad⁹⁶ which stressed the importance of knowledge. The word *dosa* was mentioned to make them familiar with any action that might lead them into evil doings so that they would give their fullest effort to avoiding being involved in any such action⁹⁷. Otherwise, as a result of doing evil, some one could be isolated by his peer group and in the hereafter would be punished by God. The word *puji* was used in order to familiarise them with a praiseworthy attribute of mankind. A person should always perform such good acts as *puji* so that people like him, and all the more so in dealing with God, the Creator⁹⁸. The words *yang tertunggal* and *tiada mithal* are derived from the Qur'ān, *sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* (112). These are another attributes of God introduced to children in their early days.

It is obvious that this type of education was done in such a way that children were not aware of conscious thought, but yet were indoctrinated. Several words and teachings were inculcated into their captive minds. This is because elements of *Īmān* and Islam were inculcated directly or indirectly

⁹⁶. *Sūrat al-ʿAlaq* (96):1-5

Read: in the name of thy Lord who createth,
Createth man from a clot,
Read: and thy Lord is the Most Bounteous,
Who teacheth by the pen,
Teacheth man that which he knew not.

Note that Allah is the actual source of knowledge, and any knowledge learned must be for the sake of Him or to fulfill His order that knowledge and skill must be used for the betterment of human beings.

⁹⁷. There are various verses of the Qur'ān to this effect such as *sūrat al-ʿAlaq* (96):6, 9 and 13.

⁹⁸. cf. Qur'ān *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*(1):1. This is the first assignment to be observed by any Muslim and of course it has a great significance in the life of a human being.

through utterance of related words. This type of education would have a very strong significance in their days to come.

ii. Qur'ānic Classes

The second type of informal education was Qur'anic studies. It was and is considered the most important and basic knowledge, that each and every one should explore without fail. It is the book of guidance⁹⁹, enjoining *ma'rūf* and prohibiting *munkar*¹⁰⁰. In *al-Baqarah* (2):185, God mentions that He first revealed the Qur'ān in the month of Ramaḍan, as a guidance for mankind and clear proof and the Criterion (of right and wrong). This means that the Qur'ān lays stress on education from the very beginning and for this reason, no doubt, the Malay tradition was to send children for Qur'ānic education. This tradition was observed in houses where parents acted as teachers or instructors.

Usually, when a child reached the age of six or seven years old, he would be taught how to pronounce the Qur'anic words and phrases properly and to recite them with the correct *tajwīd*¹⁰¹. It was a parent's greatest pride if their child was able to complete the recitation of the whole Qur'ān under the supervision of a competent teacher; otherwise, the child could be hampered

⁹⁹. It is considered to be the book which renders *hudā* or guidance to people. See *Sūrat al-Baqarah*(2):2.

¹⁰⁰. See *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān*(3):104 & 110.

¹⁰¹. The science of reading the Qur'an in the proper manner. It is a knowledge of *makhārij* of the Qur'anic alphabet and their attributes, and the act of reciting the Qur'an. See *Risalah Pedoman Bacaan Qur'ān*, (Kuala Terengganu: Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Terengganu, 1403/1983), p. 3.

with an inferiority complex if he had failed to meet the proper standard. In fact, it was usual for children at this stage to recite the Qur'an with fluency and good *tajwīd* and *tartīl*¹⁰². This shows us that the tradition of reading the Qur'an was considered important and it was open to any child in the *kampong*. According to Abdullah Munshi, before the coming of Europeans to the Malay Peninsula, there was no special school for the children except centres for learning the Qur'an and learning religion¹⁰³.

Centres of Qur'ānic education for children were scattered everywhere in the Peninsula. It was the common phenomenon that people could read the Qur'an, and in the state of Terengganu in particular people were able to write the Arabic alphabet in a very beautiful manner. As a result, copies of the Qur'an written by Terengganu people were famous throughout the Malay Peninsula¹⁰⁴ since they were written in beautiful calligraphy.

In learning the Qur'an according to traditional methods children were exposed to certain customs, norms and rituals practised in the society. Usually,

¹⁰². Abdullah al-Qari Haji Salleh, *Sejarah Hidup Tok Kenali*, (Kelantan: Pustaka Aman Press, 1967), p. 14. See also the Qur'an *Sūrat al-Muzzammil* (73):4, where Allah commands the recitor to recite the Qur'an with *tartīl*, that is in a clear and well-constructed manner, slowly and gradually. Ibn Kathīr says *tartīl* is *tamahhul*. See Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 4:459

¹⁰³. Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi, *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1893), pp. 19 & 40.
_____, *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti Sdn. Bhd., 1981), p. 27.

¹⁰⁴. *ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

yellow glutinous rice was served together with red eggs to the teacher and pupils to celebrate the completion of the whole Qur'ān by one pupil¹⁰⁵.

The process of learning the Qur'ān took several years. The most able children may have spent no more than three or four years but some others probably needed to spend as much as five or six years. Each and every child would be taught on a personal basis, one by one, either by the teacher himself or by the advanced students in whom the teacher had confidence. Whenever the teacher was satisfied with the recitation of one portion the pupil would go on to the next one, otherwise, the portion would remain unchanged until the teacher was satisfied with the recitation. Had the teacher found any wrongdoing on the part of the children, he would not hesitate to take proper action to curb it such as giving warning and beating.

Actually, these traditional centres for Qur'ānic reading were able to release parents from the burden of teaching their children and to give them ample time to do other jobs, and particularly to provide for their families.

The last stage of Qur'ānic education was the ritual of *berkhatam*¹⁰⁶. Shafie Abu Bakar, in describing this says:

¹⁰⁵. Nabir Haji Abdullah, "Ma'ahad al-Ihya Assyarif, Gunong Semanggol 1934-1959", Academic Exercise, Department of History, National University of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 1973, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶. This *berkhatam* was meant for those who completed reciting the Qur'ān for thirty *juz's*. It was considered the closing ceremony for this stage of education.

In the life of a child, the *berkhatam* of the Qur'ān consisted of ceremony of giving a small diploma which was recognized by his society, that a child was able to recite the Qur'ān¹⁰⁷.

In this ceremony teachers and friends were served with food and drinks¹⁰⁸.

Traditionally, this ritual was held simultaneously with the ritual of circumcision for a boy and concurrently with the wedding day for a girl. With its completion, the child was normally allowed to participate in any ritual which took place in the *kampong*.

iii. *Surau* or *Musalla* and Mosque

The third type of informal education was the education at prayer centres (*musallas* or *suraus*) and mosques.

Generally speaking, education at *suraus* took place when a number of children gathered in a *kampong* to study basic aspects of Islamic teaching. When the houses of the teachers could not accomodate a large number of students, the *suraus* or *musallas* and mosques were given preference. A change of places of studies would only be adopted in a case where the teacher's house could not accomodate such a growth of students' numbers, or the number was

¹⁰⁷. Shafie Abu Bakar, "Institusi Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Malik", p. 141.

¹⁰⁸. Nabir Haji Abdullah, op. cit., p. 3.

beyond their control, or there were not many knowledgeable people in the area who were prepared to volunteer to teach in the *kampong*¹⁰⁹.

Since the *surau* education was some sort of continuation of the house-based education the main concern was still the reading of the Qur'ān. Others included the basics of obligatory prayers, fasting and other requirements of the practising Muslim¹¹⁰. Thus education at these centres catered not only for the children but adults as well. *Kitab jawi* which emphasize various aspects of Islam such as theological thought, social and economic aspects of life and political thought had been their references¹¹¹.

As for the method of teaching, it was very traditional in the sense that students were seated crosslegged in front of the teacher. For the children, memorization of the basic teaching and recitation was their concern. As for the adults, reading or studying the books, in Malay *menadah kitab* was the normal phenomenon at these centres.

In Malaya and Patani, *suraus* were meant for prayers but not the

¹⁰⁹. *ibid.*, p. 2.

¹¹⁰. Nagata, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹¹¹. Mohd. Nor Ngah, *Kitab Jawi: Islamic Thought of the Malay Muslim Scholars*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1983).

congregational Friday prayer (*ṣalat al-Jumʿah*)¹¹². The word was synonymous with *langgar* in Javanese¹¹³. Sometimes even *suraus* could not accommodate the huge number of students and therefore, classes were forced to shift to mosques. Hence, mosques also were considered centres for education. This development mirrored what had long been the case in the Middle East. Indeed mosques had been virtually the first schools in Islam and it would be equally true to say that the Qurʾan was the first textbook¹¹⁴. According to Tibawi, the association of the mosque with education remained one of its characteristics throughout history;

In the early days it was the focus of all communal activities. From its pulpit religious edification and state policy were proclaimed; within its wall justice was dispensed; on its floor sat preachers and teachers surrounded by adults and children seeking learning or instruction¹¹⁵.

Equally it can be said that *suraus* and mosques were considered not only centres for prayer but also centres for education especially in the early Islamic period in the Malay Archipelago. In later times they were also utilised

¹¹². Kern, op. cit., p. 180. See also Sobri Salamon, op. cit., p. 17. Refer also the definition of the term *surau* in Introductory Chapter p. 20.

¹¹³. Sidi Ghazalba, *Mesjid Pusat Ibadat dan Kebudayaan Islam*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Antara, 1975), p. 291.

¹¹⁴. Tibawi, *Islamic Education*, p. 24.

¹¹⁵. *ibid.*, p. 24.

for the development of Islamic culture¹¹⁶.

When *suraus* and mosques took over the role of teachers' houses as centres for education and culture they were not only used to teach the Qur'ān but in addition to that, there were many other subjects taught there such as basic Islamic laws, the pillars of Islam, articles of faith, *du'a'* and others. All in all, we can say that the subjects taught revolved around basic knowledge of *'ibādah*, faith and simple *mu'āmalah*¹¹⁷ such as responsibilities of a neighbour, prohibition of cheating and so on. We find that, although the teaching was limited to the basic ideas of Islamic teachings, the result was very astonishing as it gave a strong feeling of love and adoration for God and His message¹¹⁸. Once in a while, *suraus* and mosques were attended by special guests, usually well-known speakers who gave talks. Unlike Qur'ānic or any other classes, these special occasions were not limited to students, but instead invitations were extended to the public. The idea was to pass the message to as many people as possible, since it was educative in nature¹¹⁹.

All of these prayer centres and mosques were under the control of

¹¹⁶. Sidi Ghazalba, op. cit., p. 116.

¹¹⁷. Mohd Ali Mohd Yusof, "Pendidikan dan Persekolahan di Malaysia Dahulu dan Sekarang", Diploma Thesis, Islamic College of Malaya, (Petaling Jaya, 1966), p. 69.

¹¹⁸. Zaharah Lebai Abdullah, "Pendidikan Pondok di Kalangan Masyarakat Islam di Kedah 1840an Sehingga 1957", Academic Exercise, Department of History, National University of Malaysia, (Bangi, 1978), p. 17.

¹¹⁹. *ibid.*, p. 18.

certain leaders who acted as *imām* for prayer and as leader in any function performed there¹²⁰.

Such activities mentioned above are still alive and practiced in the *suraus* or mosques, be they in the *kampong* or urban areas. There, they perform their five daily prayers in congregation, especially *maghrib* and *‘ishā’*¹²¹, have meals together on certain occasions where they commemorate special events such as the *Isrā’* and *Mī‘rāj*¹²², the day of *Nuzūl al-Qur’ān*¹²³, *Mawlid al-Rasūl*¹²⁴, *Hijrah al-Rasūl*¹²⁵ and so on. Any problem which may arise among the people is discussed and generally solved together¹²⁶. This phenomenon may be regarded as the basis of the religious or Islamic education which is found in Malay society nowadays.

3.7.2. Formal Education (*Pondok*)

The history of Islamic civilization shows that formal education is usually responsive to social changes and development of socio-

¹²⁰. *ibid.*

¹²¹. *ibid.*, p. 19.

¹²². To commemorate the Prophet Muhammad’s midnight journey to the seven heavens.

¹²³. To commemorate the first revelation of the Qur’an.

¹²⁴. To celebrate the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad.

¹²⁵. To celebrate the first day of the new Islamic calendar.

¹²⁶. Zaharah Lebai Abdullah, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

political life of a society, but it is not at the expense of the principles of Islamic education¹²⁷.

The existence of the *halaqah* system, teachers who taught reading and writing, studies at *istanas* (kings' courts)¹²⁸, studies at *pondoks*; traditional religious schools, *madrasahs*, religious schools, and centres for Islamic higher education in the formal Islamic education system indicate that education is responsive to change and has been able to change its pattern throughout from a simple one to the more complex, systematic and sophisticated. However, from the Islamic point of view the outward appearance of the system is not so important as long as it is capable of educating and moulding people and making them aware of their life in this world and the hereafter¹²⁹. Thereafter, it is hoped that students will be aware about the nature of their religion, not as a series of rituals, but rather as a way of life; *Dīn al-Islām*¹³⁰.

¹²⁷. Mohd. Kamal Hassan, Faisal Othman, Razali Nawawi, "Konsep Pendidikan Islam dan Matlamat Persekolahan Agama dan Arab di Malaysia", in Ismail Ab. Rahman, *Pendidikan Islam Malaysia*, (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1992), p. 43.

¹²⁸. The system of education at the *istana* was among the earliest in the Malay Archipelago. Its status was considered high and it was normally participated in by noble families such as those of kings and dignitaries. The subjects taught were not limited to religious matters per se but included administration and traditional politics. See Shafie Abu Bakar, "Institusi Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Malik", pp. 157-158; al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement*, p. 6. See also Mohd. Kamal Hassan et.al., op. cit., p. 43.

¹²⁹. Mohd. Kamal Hassan et.al., *ibid*.

¹³⁰. The Qur'ān itself names this religion *al-Dīn*, the system or the way of life which caters not only for the life of this mundane world but more importantly for the life of the hereafter, to which there is no end. We read the Qur'ān in *Sūrat Āl 'Imrān*(3) verse 19: we read *inn al-dīn 'ind Allāh al-Islām* which means the religion with Allah is The Surrender (*al-Islām*) (to His will and guidance). Sayyid Quṭb in interpreting *dīn al-malik* in *sūrat Yūsuf* (12):76, exemplifies the Divine system to the system of a king and thus it must be obeyed and observed by everyone. See Quṭb, op. cit., 4:2021.

To produce a good person in the Islamic perspective, is not a simple and easy job. It needs sacrifice from all who are involved in it. Efforts and endeavours should be invested at the highest level. Therefore, early and informal education, especially at home, is considered important. It should be well blended in order to have a good outcome.

Again from the Islamic perspective, both informal and formal education are complementary to each other¹³¹. Otherwise, there would not be any good Muslim, or to use the expression of the Qur'ān, *insān ṣāliḥ*¹³². However, for the purpose of our study I will only probe into the nature of *pondok* education. Later on it will be studied in the light of the practices of the Medieval Islamic educational system.

The *pondok* may be regarded as the most typical kind of Islamic education in the Malay Peninsula, and until relatively recently has been virtually the only

¹³¹. Muhammad Kamal Hassan et. al., op. cit., p. 43.

¹³². The Qur'an always urges people to do good and avoid bad deeds. Therefore, it mentions several praiseworthy and blameworthy attributes so that people can do good and avoid evil. In the end, those who are successful and obedient are rewarded by God. These people are called *insān ṣāliḥ* or *al-ṣāliḥūn* or *al-ladhīn 'amilu al-ṣāliḥāt*. See for example the Qur'ān *Sūrat Muḥammad* (47):2 where God mentions that,

those who believe and do good works and believe in that which is revealed to Muhammad- and it is the truth from their Lord- He riddeth them of their ill-deeds and improveth their state.

These believers are given a better life and their ill-deeds are taken away from them provided that they are faithful in their belief and do good works. In other word they are good men and this is the aim of education in Islam that is to produce a good man that he is inculcated with *adab*. A good man is not necessarily a complete man because no one can be regarded as a complete man for there is no end to the growth of human personality. For detailed discussion on this see Syed Ali Ashraf, Syed Muhammad al-Naqib al-Attas, *Aims and Objectives*, preface, p. ix and introduction p, 1 respectively.

form of Islamic education available in the Peninsula and culturally Malay areas such as Patani. The most gifted students in the past would have travelled to Mecca, or more recently al-Azhar in Egypt to continue their education, but the great majority were entirely educated within the *pondok* system. As a result the range of teaching available in *pondoks* was enormous, from the most elementary to advanced studies.

As we shall see below, the *pondok* retains enormous importance in the Malay Peninsula, but is now supplemented by *madrasahs*, the state educational system and the universities. The challenge which this situation poses to the *pondok* and the extent to which the latter may be compelled to adapt will form a major part of our study.

Although the beginnings of the *pondok* system in the Peninsula remain obscure, most scholars seem agreed in regarding it as a relatively recent phenomenon dating back to the late 18th century. Even if this is so, it would appear to be a development from earlier institutions such as the *pasantren* or the *ranggang* and thus to have deep historical roots in the Malay Archipelago.

Pondok education may be regarded as formal education because it was the only Islamic higher educational system which came into being and existed

in traditional life apart from informal education at *suraus* and mosques¹³³.

Therefore, it is believed that;

The existence of this type of education which has continued until the present day is no doubt a result of the intellectual effect brought by Islam¹³⁴.

It is believed that the word *Pondok* is originally the Arabic word *funduq* which means an inn or lodging place for travellers. In Malay, the word means 'hut'. It is normally built from wood or bamboo with palm leaf roofs and raised on stilts several feet off the ground. This is the picture of the typical Malay house. From the small cluster of huts other small huts would be built until finally the area concerned would be filled with such huts. In the past in West Asia such huts were not found, but camps or brick houses which were meant for students coming from far-off countries¹³⁵. Rural farmers built this kind of hut as a temporary shelter on their farms during the harvest time. In the context of the Malay traditional education system, the term *pondok* actually

¹³³. The word formal here means that at that time, the *pondok* was the only institution which was formal in nature and operation. This assessment is based on the existence of rules and regulations set up by the *pondoks'* authorities as well as by the subject matter which was introduced to its students. Students were supposed to abide by the regulations. Otherwise, they would be punished. As a result, this system produced figures of religion known in the society as '*ulama*', whose task was to continue implementing the system in society.

¹³⁴. Shafie Abu Bakar, "Institusi Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Malik", p. 148.

¹³⁵. Muḥammad 'Uthmān El-Muḥammady, "Pondok Education As Indigenous Education" *JPI*, year 1, no. 1, (1984), p. 52.

referred to the lodgings of the students of the traditional institution¹³⁶. Each hut served as a dormitory to accommodate two or three out-of-town students. In the *pondok* students slept, cooked for themselves, ate and studied at the same spot¹³⁷. However, the cleanliness of the place was normally taken care of by everyone. As such its functions seem to be quite similar to those of the *khān* of medieval Islam¹³⁸.

As a residential learning centre, the complex of the *pondok* consisted of students' houses built scatteredly around major buildings, ie. the central mosque, the additional teaching house known as *surau*¹³⁹, the houses of the principal teacher, assistant teachers and their families and small shops¹⁴⁰. It was located close to their education centres in order to facilitate their attendance at their classes. Usually the students brought their belongings along with them so that they did not need to be inconvenienced by lack of foodstuffs

¹³⁶. The term *Pondok* in the Malay Peninsula referred to the whole system of traditional institutions as well as the buildings meant as lodgings for the students. In Java, the whole system was known as *pasantren* and *pondok* referred to the buildings where students were sheltered. In Aceh, the term *ranggang* was applied to both, the whole system as well as the lodging place for their students. So the name *ranggang* was actually replaced by *pondok* in the Malay Peninsula. See H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramers, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (Leiden: E. J. Brill and London: Luzac and Co., 1961), pp. 460, 462.

¹³⁷. Shafie Abu Bakar, "Ke Arah Pembaikan dan Pengembangan Sistem Pondok di Malaysia", *JPI*, No. 2, Oct. 1984, pp. 30-31; Noor Haliza Nih, "Peranan Institusi Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam Memupuk kesedaran Politik di Terengganu", *Academic Exercise*, Department of History, National University of Malaysia, Bangi, 1989/90, pp. 27-28. See also Omar, op. cit., p. 94.

¹³⁸. Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges*, pp. 23-24.

¹³⁹. Omar, op. cit., p. 95.

¹⁴⁰. Omar, op. cit., p. 95. See also, Gibb and Kramers, *Shorter EI*, p. 460. .

and other needs during their stay at the centre.

There were certain factors that led to the emergence of the *pondok* institution. It was generally a result of rapid development in a religious undertaking either at *suraus*¹⁴¹ or mosques¹⁴² which caused an increase in the number of students. They were forced to find accomodation due to the inability of the study centres, the *suraus* and the mosque, to provide them with lodgings. In order to cope with the problem, they built small houses surrounding the *suraus* or the mosques.

Historically speaking, the *pondok* in the Malay Peninsula is generally believed to have started in the late 18th¹⁴³ or early 19th¹⁴⁴ centuries.

The question of in which part of the Malay Peninsula was the *pondok* first established has become a subject of dispute among the scholars. Some hold to the idea that it was first introduced in Kelantan by a very famous

¹⁴¹. Zaharah L. Abdullah, op. cit, p. 23, quoting Ahmad Ismail, "Perkembangan Institusi Ugama di Seberang Perai", Academic Exercise, Dept. of History, National University of Malaysia, 1974, p. 11.

¹⁴². Shafie Abu Bakar, "Institusi Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Malik", p. 148.

¹⁴³. ibid., p. 28.

¹⁴⁴. Zaharah L. Abdullah, op. cit., p. 23.

scholar by the name of Haji Wan Ali b. Abdul Rahman Khutam (1837-1912)¹⁴⁵. He was later on followed by Haji Abdul Samad b. Muhammad Salih known as Tuan Tabal (1840-1891), Haji ‘Umar Ismail Nuruddin (1870-1946) and then Haji Muhammad Yusuf b. Muhammad, known as Tok Kenali (1868-1933)¹⁴⁶.

This is probably the cause of the existence of a huge number of *pondok* scholars in Kelantan as well as of *pondok* institutions. They were scattered over the state of Kelantan and remain so to the present day. No other state in the present Malaysia can produce such a great number of *pondok* scholars as does Kelantan.

Shafie Abu Bakar, however, asserts that the first *pondok* institution in Terengganu was founded by a famous ‘*ulama*’ by the name of Shaykh Abdul Malik (1089-1149/1678-1736) the son of Sharif Muhammad, an Iraqi ‘*ulama*’

¹⁴⁵. There are two names given by previous researchers as that of the first founder of a *pondok* in Kelantan. Zaharah in her thesis mentions Haji Wan Khutam b. Abdul Rahman al-Kelantani (1837-1912), born in Khutan, Pasir Pekan, Kelantan, near Kota Bharu, whereas Nik Abdul Aziz asserts that it was Haji Wan Ali bin Abdul Rahman Khutam (1837-1912) or to make it short, Haji Wan Ali Khutam, because he was born in Khutam, a kampong near Kota Bharu. See Zaharah L. Abdullah, op. cit., p. 30. Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Hassan, "Islam dan Masyarakat Kota Bharu di Antara Tahun 1900-1940", in *Islam di Kelantan* (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1983), p. 4 (hereafter cited as "Islam dan Masyarakat"). In my opinion, the name Haji Wan Ali seems to be more acceptable. Khutam (in Zaharah's) is very likely to be a misprint of his place of birth. As a matter of fact it is Khutan with the letter "n" and not Khutam. However, the mistake is probably also due to the local people's accent. Their pronunciation is Khute, without the last letter "n", thus it may confuse the non-familiar listener. This ascription to the place of birth is similar to the Arab custom of *kunyah* like *al-Baghdādī*, *al-Khurāsānī* etc. which refers to the place of birth of the individual or his ancestors.

¹⁴⁶. Zaharah L. Abdullah, op. cit, p. 30. See also, Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Hassan, "Islam dan Masyarakat", p. 4.

who came and settled in Terengganu¹⁴⁷. He established his *pondok* at Pulau Manis, beside the Terengganu River. Therefore, he became well known as Tok Pulau Manis. He was first educated at Aceh and later on went to study at Mecca¹⁴⁸. According to Khoo Kay Kim, his *pondok* was most probably the earliest centre in the Malay peninsula¹⁴⁹.

The majority of *pondoks* in the Malay Peninsula were founded by scholars who were educated at first in Patani¹⁵⁰ especially the Kelantanese and those from the northern part of the Peninsula, before they went to Mecca to deepen their religious studies, with the exception of Tok Pulau Manis, who was educated in Aceh, and several others on the west coast of the Peninsula. Several *pondoks* were established in Selangor, Perak and Negeri Sembilan by either Javanese, Acehnese, Mandiling, Banjar or Minangkabau scholars. However, they did not enjoy the same popularity as did those in the northern and eastern parts of the Peninsula. One of the best known of them was

¹⁴⁷. Sharif Muhammad arrived in Ulu Terengganu, Terengganu at the end of the 11/17 century. He died in Kampong Batu Belah which is not far from Kuala Brang, in Ulu Terengganu. See Shafie Abu Bakar, "Institusi Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Malik", p. 20, quoting Muhammad Salih b. Haji Awang, *Mengkaji Sejarah Terengganu*, (Singapore: Ahmadiyah Press, 1954), pp. 22-23.

¹⁴⁸. *ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁹. Khoo Kay Kim, "Perkembangan Pelajaran Agama Islam", in *Pendidikan ke Arah Perpaduan*, (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti Sdn. Bhd., 1980), p. 5 (hereafter cited as "Perkembangan"). Actually this issue has been a subject of dispute among Malay scholars.

¹⁵⁰. Patani is at now under the administration of Thailand. It was close to Kelantan, one of the northern states of the Malay Peninsula. According to Hasan Madmarn, Patani with one "t" historically indicates a Malay city-state once controlled by the Malay Sultanate. This one-t form is used by most writers. See Madmarn, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

Madrasah Saadiyah-Salihiah at Kampong Temoh, Perak¹⁵¹. Thus, Patani had a great influence on the *pondok* system in terms of books, methods of teaching and approaches¹⁵². Many of the books (*kitab*s) were either written or translated by the Patani scholars¹⁵³.

There is an indication that Patani had a link with Pasai scholars. It was Pasai scholars who introduced the *pondok* in Patani. There was indeed a *kampong* in Patani which was given the name of 'Pasai'. Most of the Pasai scholars who went to teach religious studies in Patani settled in this *kampong*.

The survival of any *pondok* institution in the past can be traced back to two inter-related factors, viz. the reputation of the *tok guru* and his personality and amount of financial support he had from the community. Normally the more popular the *tok guru* and the more students came to study under him at his *pondok*, the more financial support he received from the community. As in the case of the *madrasah* in medieval Islam which relied on endowments

¹⁵¹. For further discussion, refer to Badriyah Haji Salleh, *op. cit.* This is a historical analysis of a *madrasah* where Javanese influence was totally dominant from the very beginning. All the books and references were taken from Java. The medium of instruction was Javanese. The teachers were Javanese. The curriculum was based on a Javanese pattern. Even the *madrasah* was initially open only to those of Javanese origin. It was secluded and isolated by the founder, Haji Salleh, and it was meant for Javanese. Therefore, it is no wonder that it could not continue and in the end the Javanese pattern was abolished and the *madrasah* opened to children other than Javanese and changed in many ways, especially in its pattern and curriculum.

¹⁵². Zaharah L. Abdullah, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

¹⁵³. *ibid.*, p. 28.

(*awqāf*)¹⁵⁴, the *pondok* mostly relied on the community because it had no independent income. There were not even any tuition fees and the teachers were teaching on a voluntary basis which was considered an obligation on each Muslim who knows any sort of knowledge. *Zakat* (almsgiving) was the most popular means of support from the public. Other sources included charity, donations and presents for performing any religious duty¹⁵⁵. Through donations the *tok guru* earned his living and through charitable trusts the *pondok* could survive from several acres of rubber plantation, paddy fields, fruit trees or others. The charity tax of paddy owned by *pondok* supporters which are given to *pondok* once or twice a year on regular basis after the harvest was an important factor that keeps the *pondok* alive¹⁵⁶.

Finally, almost all the great figures of the *pondok* completed their religious studies at Masjid al-Ḥarām in Mecca before occupying any scholarly chair at any *pondok* centre throughout the Malay Peninsula. Shaykh 'Abdul Malik b. Abdullah well-known as Tok Pulau Manis came back from Mecca at the end of 17th century and founded his *pondok* institution at Pulau Manis¹⁵⁷. Haji Wan Abdullah b. Wan Mohammad Amin well-known as Tok Sheikh Duyung went to Mecca in 1832 and returned home in 1846 and subsequently

¹⁵⁴. See for example, the Nizāmiyyah and Mustanşiriyyah *madāris* in 3.4., pp. 185-186.

¹⁵⁵. For example, *Ṣalāt al-janāzah* and the related ceremonies might become a source of income to the *pondok* and its inhabitants. *Ṣalāt al-hājjah* is another means.

¹⁵⁶. Madmarn, op. cit., pp. 139-140.

¹⁵⁷. Shafie Abu Bakar, "Institusi Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Malik", p. 99.

established his *pondok* at Pulau Duyung¹⁵⁸. Haji Abdul Samad b. Mohamad Salleh well-known as Tuan Tabal returned from Mecca in the mid 1860s to Kelantan¹⁵⁹. Others are like Haji Muhammad Yusuf known as Tok Kenali, Haji Wan Abdul Latif of Besut, Haji Abdullah Tahir, Bunut Payung, Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin and so on. As a result, the Meccan pattern had a great influence on the running of the *pondok*. To end up, it seems valuable to ponder over a commentary given by T. W. Arnold in his famous book, *The Preaching of Islam*:

Beside the pilgrims who content themselves with merely visiting the sacred places and performing the due ceremonies, and those who make a longer stay in order to complete their theological studies, there is a large colony of Malays in Mecca at the present time, who have taken up their residence permanently in the sacred city. These are in constant communication with their fellow-countrymen in their native land, and their efforts have been largely effectual in purging Muhammadanism in the Malay Archipelago from the contamination of heathen customs and modes of thought that have survived from an earlier period. A large number of religious books is also printed in Mecca in the various languages spoken by the Malay Muhammadans and carried to all parts of the Archipelago. Indeed Mecca has been well said to have more influence on the religious life of these islands than on Turkey, India or Bukhara.

As might be anticipated from a consideration of these facts, there has been of recent years a very great awakening of missionary activity in the Malay Archipelago, and the returned pilgrims, whether as merchants or religious teachers, become preachers of Islam wherever they come in contact with a heathen

¹⁵⁸. Mohammad Abu Bakar, "Tok Syekh Duyung", in *Ulama Terengganu: Suatu Sorotan*, (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications and Distributors Sd. Bhd., 1991), pp. 159-160.

¹⁵⁹. Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Hassan, "Lima Orang Tokoh Ulama di Negeri Kelantan", in *Islam di Kelantan*, (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1983), p. 23.

population¹⁶⁰.

3.8. Conclusion

In the foregoing discussions we have seen that the coming of Islam to the Malay Archipelago, especially to the Malay Peninsula, played a vital role in changing the Malay pattern of life. Apart from their mass conversion to Islam, the Malays learnt the importance of education through their adherence to the religion. Educational institutions of various forms were immediately set up and were scattered throughout the Peninsula, following the Muslims of the medieval past. However, in the Peninsula the names of the institutions varied according to the norms of the localities, but the concept remained the same in places where elementary educational centres were established which were followed by centres for advanced students. *Pondok*, the highest traditional educational institution, played a vital role in the society and its role was extended from educational to pure religious and then into the wider spectrum of the traditional Malay society. *Pondok* shows that Islamic education is an important element in shaping the Malays into religious life and as a result the Malay society had a very high regard for religious education. This in turn contributed to the survival of the social organizations in the Malay community. Thus, the system is a significant institution for perpetuating Islamic awareness and the creation of a strong religious Malay society. The following chapter will

¹⁶⁰. T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, 2nd ed. (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1913), pp. 406-407 quoting partly Snouck Hurgronje (3), vol. ii. pp. xv. 339-393. *Encyclopaedia van N. - 1.*, vol. ii. pp. 576-9.

shed a clearer light on the *pondok* methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology of Teaching: *Pondok* Experience

4.1. Introduction

As the title suggests, my objective here is to present a study on the norms and practices of the most important traditional educational institution of Islam in the Malay Peninsula, i.e. *pondok* education in its methodological aspect. As a matter of fact, in the past, *pondok* played a very important role in shaping the life of its students as well as that of society at large. It also brought light to the emergence of the Islamic intellectual movement in the Peninsula. Thus, in this chapter, a study will be made of the system which had such a great impact on the society. Further, the researcher will also attempt to establish the symbiotic relationship that existed between the proselytization process and the role of the *pondok* *gurus* whose religious knowledge contributed to the shaping of the thinking methods of their students. As a result, it moulded their behaviour, conduct and thoughts in line with the "pure religious teachings", i.e. teachings which are based on religious subjects such as *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *tafsīr* and the like, rather than the actual Islamic teachings which cater for both the religious and mundane. I will thus try to show the influence of the system on the students' daily life and how they behave during their acquisition of knowledge.

4.2. *Pondok*: A System

For a long period *pondok* centres seem to have used a teaching system which is widely known as the *ḥalaqah* or study circle. It is a form of educational experience in Islam and has been the simplest type of early Muslim education since the time of the Prophet. Although there are other systems introduced by the modern advanced schooling system using facilities such as blackboards, maps, chalk, overhead projectors and other things, most *pondok* centres in the past as well as in the present still depend on this system without any change. Thus *ḥalaqah* is a peculiar and essential characteristic of *pondok* education. Since the pattern of the educational process remains unchanged at *pondok* centres from its traditional form, the *ḥalaqah* or study circle was and is still popular as a method of education in the process of teaching and learning.

As a system, it can be divided into three types, *Farq ʿAyn*, *Niẓāmī*, i.e. the organized *ḥalaqah* and *ʿUmūmī*, i.e. the open one¹ (see Appendix A).

4.2.1. *Farq ʿAyn*

In the past students attending the *pondok* circle had at least the basic

¹. Interview with Tok Guru Haji Najmuddin, 05/06/93. Cf. *Intiqāliyyah*, *Niẓāmī*, *ʿUmūmī* of Azmi Omar, op. cit., pp.178-179. Actually the division of students into different levels was observed during the early days of Islam. However, it was not that sharp. It was sharply divided during medieval Islam. See the discussion about it in Chapter Two, 2.7. Ihsan Hardiwijaya Ibaga classifies the Islamic educational system in the Malay peninsula into two viz. the school and the *pondok* system. The *pondok* system which was inherited from Masjid al-Ḥarām, Mecca is divided into two; the listener (*pendengar*), the masses, and secondly the learner (*penadah*), the student. Ihsan Hardiwijaya Ibaga, "Ulama dan Sistem *Pondok* di Kelantan Abad ke 19", *Dian*, Bil. 120, May, 1979.

ability to read the Qur'ān and to write in *jawi* script. Thus they could be enrolled in any suitable lesson offered in the *'umūmī* circle. They were not in need of basic lessons, for they had been taught in their own villages, in Qur'ānic classes at the houses of learned men, *surau* (*muṣallā*), *madrasah* or *masjid*. Strictly speaking, there has never been any *kuttāb* school² in the Malay Peninsula. However, all classes of reading the Qur'ān at various places are comparable with the *kuttāb*, though there is no lesson for writing or reading in some of the classes.

Generally speaking, many *suraus* and mosques are adopting the *kuttāb* system, to the extent that their students are more advanced in terms of curriculum and building than some *pondok* centres. Thus the students do not need to be taught the basic skills needed at the *pondok*. However, at present, due to difficulties in getting basic teaching of the Qur'an and *jawi* writing especially in villages, some students sent to *pondok*, upon enrollment, can hardly read the Qur'ān at all, let alone read and write *jawi* script.

². According to one of the current researchers on elementary Islamic education in Malaysia, the *kuttāb* system has never been introduced in Malaysia despite its popularity and prevalence in other Muslim countries. The system stresses reading and memorizing the Qur'ānic text, sometimes by rote learning though children do not understand its meaning. Apart from memorizing the Qur'ān, other subjects such as reading, writing, mathematics, Arabic, geography, poetry and other basic subjects are also offered. Students are enrolled as young as five years old. The system started with short *sūrah*s of the Qur'ān. Neither elucidation nor explanation are given to them. The aim is solely to get familiar with verses and memorization, to get blessings and to inculcate the feeling of *taqwā* (God-fearing) and sincerity. See Abdul Halim al-Muhammady, *Pendidikan Islam*, pp. 80-81. See also other articles by him, "Pendidikan al-Qur'ān di Sekolah Rendah dan Menengah Kearifan Pembentukan pandangan Hidup Muslim", *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, no. 6/1987, p. 35 and "Al-Qur'ān dan Pembelajarannya di Malaysia", *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, no.3/1990, p.7.

Normally, a one year remedial circle is considered sufficient for those who do not have any skills at all in Qur'ān and *jawi* writing, and thereafter they will be enrolled into the proper *niẓāmi* class for four years. This class is considered remedial, for it is not counted as part of the *pondok* proper. Though they stay in the *pondok* institution, the subjects offered to them are not the concern of the *pondok guru*. In this respect, the remedial circle plays no more than the role of *kuttāb* or kindergarten school to teach the basic lessons and skills.

At Pondok Moden Kerandang, such a class is run by five lady teachers headed by the first wife of the *Tok Guru*. She is assisted by his second wife, his sister and two other ladies³.

4.2.2. *Niẓāmi*

Basically, the *niẓāmi* circle is adopted from the *madrasah* system during medieval Islam. The most important feature of the *madrasah* was its *īwān* (lecture hall)⁴. In the Malay Peninsula, apart from establishing the ideas of the *madrasah*, it was influenced by the system introduced by the British colonials during their stay in the peninsula. However, this system has been adopted by

³. Interview with Tok Guru Haji Najmuddin, 05/06/93.

⁴. Its peculiarities rest upon a certain number of items namely; *īwān* or *qā'ah al-muḥāḍarah*, a hostel as a lodging-place especially for out-of-town students, a limited number of students, appointment of fixed teachers and fixed subjects. See Aḥmad Shalabī, *al-Tarbiyah wa al-Ta'līm fi al-Fikr al-Islāmī*, (10th ed.), (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1992), p. 117.

some pondok schools only, for those *pondoks* which do not enrol students without a basic knowledge will not introduce this system.

As far as the researcher knows, the first of this type was introduced in the Peninsula by Haji Wan Sulaiman Haji Wan Sidek of Kedah in 1906⁵. He had actually transformed the old *pondok* building at Limbong Kapal to a modernized complex with the help of donations from the public. The most generous donor was Haji Wan Abdul Ghani b. Wan Ismail who endowed his land for this purpose⁶.

The *nizāmī* is actually the transitional class where basic lessons are taught. Those who are able to read the Qur'ān, hadith, *jawi*, and understand basic Arabic and its related subjects are not supposed to attend this class. Thus, the *nizāmī* class is comparable with the remove-class (*iḍādī*) in the government schools. Due to the nature of the class and to fulfill its objectives, students must stay in the *pondok* area just like other students, though some of them are not yet matured. They have to struggle in their studies and to keep up with the life in the *pondok* just as the adults do.

The *nizāmī* has a time limit. At certain *pondoks*, four years is considered sufficient for the students to get a basic knowledge about Islam. Upon

⁵. Haji Mustafa Mohd Isa, op. cit., p. 442.

⁶. ibid., p. 441-442.

graduation from the circle the student is fit to attend any *‘umūmī* circle. Though at times they are encouraged to attend the *‘umūmī* circle while in the *nizāmī* circle as has been mentioned, this is only to get them familiarized with the subjects offered and to get blessings from God for attending a *majlis al-‘ilm*.

The *nizāmī* circle has its own specific timetable. In one of the *pondoks*, students of this circle have to attend four day classes in a week. Each day they will be given two hour of lessons. Subjects offered to them are basic in comparison with *‘umūmī* circle. All lessons are at preliminary level, be they Arabic, jurisprudence or other basic tenets of Islam.

Subjects offered at *nizāmī* circles are elementary in nature. The most important of them are elementary Arabic and jurisprudence. Contrary to the *‘umūmī*, in the *nizāmī* a test is given to the students. However, as usual, it is neither to grade their ability nor to supply them with certificates upon their graduation. It is mainly to ensure their commitment to pursuing knowledge. Thus no credit is accumulated even though it takes place twice a year⁷. As in the *madrasah* in medieval Islam, a testimonial letter is given upon request provided they have completed the stipulated time in this circle⁸.

4.2.3. *‘Umūmī*

⁷. Omar, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

⁸. Ibid.

This is considered the nucleus of the *pondok* system or the core of the teaching pattern at the *pondok* school⁹. It takes place in either of two forms; *menadah kitab* (learning by textbook) whereby students learn from pre-determined texts, or *mendengar* (listening) where the students do not use any material during classes¹⁰.

The circle is regular among the students of the *pondok*. This circle is open to all people at all levels; those who stay in the *pondok* and become *budak pondok*¹¹ or villagers who live in the surrounding area.

This method is the most popular among the *pondoks'* *gurus* and they exercise this method in most of their teaching processes. Sometimes they are invited to give talks outside their *pondok* centres and the same method is used by them. The *kitab* is the only tool the *tok guru* has to bring during the teaching. *Kitab jawi*¹² is normally used outside their *pondok* circle as the

⁹. See the discussion about non-formal education in Muslim countries in Chapter Two, 2.6.5., p. 142. The study circle (*halaqah*) was the basis of adult education.

¹⁰. See note 1 above.

¹¹. The term used to denote the students of *pondok* may vary according to the local usage. In some regions they might be called *budak pondok*. In some other places they are called *lebai pondok* and in some other areas they might be known as *anak murid*. See Omar, op. cit., p. 101; Awang Had Salleh, "Institusi Pondok di Malaysia", in Zainal Kling, *Masyarakat Melayu*, K. Lumpur: Utusan Publications and Distributors, 1977, pp. 37-38; Madmarn, op. cit., p. 125.

¹². Religious books written in the classical Malay language using Arabic characters. Literally, *kitab* means "book" and *jawi* means "people of Java" which also refers to "Malays" because the Arabs in the past considered all the people in the Malay Archipelago as Javanese. Therefore the Malay writing using Arabic characters is called *jawi* script. *Kitab* in Malay usage means only "religious book"; the term *jawi* also refers to the people of Sumatra and Malays in General. See Mohd Nor Ngah, *Kitab Jawi; Islamic Thought of the Malay Muslim Scholars*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast

masses are the target and most of them do not understand Arabic. A learned *guru*, would read from the *kitab* which he had written himself. Haji Wan Sulaiman b. Wan Sidek widely known as Pak Wan Sulaiman, usually read from his own work¹³, so did Tuan Hussain b. Muhammad Nasir al-Mas'ūdi al-Banjari, better known as Tuan Hussain Kedah, his contemporary and rival¹⁴ in the former's method of teaching *ṭarīqat*.

Each *budak pondok* has to bring along with him the pre-determined textbook for the circle. Normally there are many circles for various lessons and levels in a day. The main characteristic of this circle is that students are free to attend any level or lesson they like. Nonetheless, students with less knowledge will not attend a class at a higher level. Equally students who are highly knowledgable will not attend a lower-level class unless they wish to refresh their minds and regulate ideas taught in that particular subject. However, at Pondok Madrasah al-Bakriyyah in Pasir Tumbuh, Kelantan, the beginners are encouraged to attend the *'umūmī* circle with the hope that they will get acquainted with the subjects taught and the blessings of God will be bestowed upon them¹⁵.

Asian Studies, 1983), Preface pp. vii-viii.

¹³. Haji Mustafa Mohd Isa, *op. cit.*, 1990, p. 437.

¹⁴. *ibid.*, p. 410 and 457.

¹⁵. Omar, *op. cit.*, p. 179-180.

One of the most important features of learning during the medieval period was the preference for lessons in circles. Though the Qur'ān was considered the core of the curriculum, *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) emerged as the most popular field of learning. Next came the Qur'ān and then hadith. At the *pondok* too the most popular subject in their circles is *fiqh*¹⁶. The second is *tafsir al-Qur'ān* (Qur'ānic exegesis), followed closely by hadith or *uṣūl al-dīn* (theology).

An outstanding student will be given a letter listing his ability in reading texts and a recommendation concerning his proficiency in teaching those texts¹⁷. However, as has been said earlier this letter is not meant as an employment qualification or for enrollment in any institution of higher learning. Those who wish to become government employees have to further their studies in any recognised higher institution, be it inside the country or abroad. Looking to the system practised in the government higher institutions, there seems to be no room for them to be admitted as their students unless they have passed and achieved a certain standard in a stipulated examination set up by the Ministry of Education. In order to avoid difficulties and hassle in adjusting to new areas with which they are not conversant, almost all preferred to go abroad to either the university of al-Azhar in Cairo or Dār al-

¹⁶. Interview with Tok Guru Haji Daud Abdul Rahman, 04/05/93 and Tok Guru Haji Hussin, 05/06/93. See also Wan Zahidi Wan Teh, *op. cit.*, p. 117; Omar, *op. cit.*, p. 174. At Pondok Amir, Besut, a *fiqh* subject is held almost every night.

¹⁷. *ibid.*

4.3. Daily Life

Regardless of whether the circle is *‘umūmī* or *nizāmī*, students have to abide by the life established in the *pondok*. This pattern of life is considered a part and parcel of education for it is concerned with the practical aspects of their studies¹⁸.

Generally speaking the pattern of life is similar in almost all *pondok* institutions. The idea is to make them get used to the true life promulgated in the *pondok* system. The stress is on purification of heart or soul¹⁹. Once the soul is correct, life can be geared towards realizing the purpose of the creation of the human being as promulgated in *sūrat al-dhāriyāt* (51):56; i.e. to serve God as His true obedient servant.

We will observe the life style adopted at the *pondok* centres to get a clear picture of their pattern of indirect knowledge absorbed during their educational life. It is important to examine their daily life, for the *pondok*

¹⁸. They worship God and practise their religious duties (*‘ibādāt*) at the same place where they learn. Thus theoretical aspect of education is always followed by the practical aspect. Muḥammad ‘Uthmān al-Muḥammadi, "Pondok Benteng yang Masih Kebal", part 2, p. 14.

¹⁹. According to Ibn Taymiyyah, learning is a behavioral process which aims at understanding experience and applying it in life. Heart, which is the reality of man and the essence of his becoming, is the instrument of learning. Heart has two powers; reasoning power and will power. The reasoning power begins in the heart and ends in the brain, while the will power begins in the heart and ends in organs. He uses the term "heart" to mean the soul. Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatāwā*, al-Manṭiq, (Riyāḍ, 1961), 9:309.

community is actually a "microcosm" in modern Malaysian life. They are not much affected by the surroundings in terms of life pattern. Any knowledge or religious commitment which a *tok guru* inclines to, will be adopted in the *pondok* in accordance with their norms which are based on their inherited interpretation of the above-said *sūrat al-dhāriyāt*.

At Pasir Putih, Kelantan, a state on the East coast of the Malay Peninsula, there exists a still-dominant *pondok* which was re-established in 1954²⁰. Historically speaking, it can be traced back as early as 1927 when it was first established by a teacher by the name of Haji Yunus Awang Buang²¹ in a place called Tok Barat. In 1933 this *pondok* was transferred to its present site with the enrollment of about 30 students occupying 9 huts. Due to the death of Yunus Awang Buang in 1947, the *Pondok* nearly came to an end as his successor, Abdul Majid Yaakub was not as popular and charismatic as his predecessor, especially when another *pondok* was set up nearby in 1948. However, the tables were turned when its leadership was taken over by Abdul

²⁰. This *pondok* is widely known as Pondok Pasir Tumbuh. Officially it is named al-Madrasah al-Diniah al-Bakriah or al-Madrasah al-Bakriyyah. Bakriyyah is an appellation of Abu Bakar; the father of the two out the three founders of the *pondok*. Its exact location is at Kampong Terosan, Pasir Putih, about five miles from Kota Bharu. It is said that this *pondok* took over the popularity of Pondok Madrasah al-Ahmadiyah, Bunut Payong which was modernized and adopted the formal *madrasah* system in 1961. See Abdullah Al-Qari Haji Salleh, *Kelantan Serambi Mekah di Zaman Tuk Kenali*, Kota Bharu, Pustaka Asa, 1988, p. 6 (hereafter referred as *Kelantan Serambi Mekah*); Abdul Rashid Haji Ahmad, *Kedudukan Pondok Dalam Masyarakat di Kelantan*, Academic Exercise, University Malaya, 1966, p. 15; Omar, op. cit., p. 149.

²¹. Muḥammad ʿUthmān al-Muḥammadī, "Pondok: Benteng yang Masih Kebal", part 1, p. 23.

Aziz²², the eldest son of Abu Bakar, the father of an affluent religious family in that area²³.

This *pondok* observes a considerably tight daily programme for its students. It starts with morning prayer. The more devoted students wake up earlier to perform several early morning supererogatory prayers, while some of them spend their early morning time to refresh their mind by doing revision on subjects they have learnt. Some of them try to memorize certain portions of texts which they are assigned to commit to memory. The dawn prayer is observed later on in *jamā'ah* (congregation). After the prayer all teachers and students are required to participate in a mystical *dhikr* session. This is one of the means to purify their soul and to get God's blessing in order to facilitate their studies. A shorter version of the *dhikr* is repeated throughout the day especially after every obligatory prayer.

Five periods are given to the 'umūmī circle. Two of them run right from early morning after the prayer (*ṣubḥ*) until the noon prayer. The third takes place between afternoon prayer (*ʿaṣr*) and the sunset prayer (*maghrib*). The fourth class is held after the sunset prayer and the last one is taught after the

²². He was one of the famous students of Haji Abdullah Tahir, the founder and the chief *guru* of Pondok Madrasah al-Ahmadiyah, Bunut Payong, Kelantan. Haji Abdullah Tahir himself was a former student of the legendary *pondok tok guru* of Kelantan; Tok Kenali, or by his actual name Haji Muhammad Yusuf (d.1933). See Abdullah al-Qari Haji Saleh, *Kelantan Serambi Mekah*, pp. 5-6.

²³. Omar, op. cit., pp. 149-150.

night prayer (*‘ishā’*).

As for the *nizāmī* circles, their schedule is not as tight as the *‘umūmī*. Their classes run between the noon prayer (*ẓuhr*) and the afternoon prayer (*‘aṣr*) on Sundays²⁴, Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Nonetheless, as I have mentioned earlier, students are encouraged to attend *‘umūmī* circles to get acquainted with them and to get blessings so that they can learn more easily when the time comes.

Generally speaking, the daily life of the *pondok* starts very early in the morning before dawn. The students have to wake up before the *fajr al-ṣādiq* (true dawn) during which the time of *ṣalāt al-fajr* (dawn prayer), starts. Usually, the first *adhān* (calling for prayer) is made prior to the true dawn, so that the students will have enough time to bathe and perform the *wuḍū’* (ablution). In some *pondoks* the *tok gurus* go to each student’s hut and awaken him by calling out "*ṣalāt, ṣalāt*". Always heard in the *adhān* of the dawn prayer is the phrase: *al-ṣalāt khayr min al-naʾwm* (prayer is better than sleep). At this particular moment nobody remains sleeping, but all get up to join the *ṣufūf* (lines), of the *ṣalat al-fajr* with their fellow students. Before worship begins, the

²⁴. Sunday is a working day for some of the states in Malaysia. Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, Perlis and Johor do not follow the Central government having a weekend on Sundays. In lieu of changing it, they still adhere to making Fridays part of the weekend. Those who adhere to the idea that Friday is a holiday for Muslims believe in the Prophetic saying that Friday is considered one of the *‘Id* days in Islam. Others, though they believe in that, have a different perception, that *‘Id* does not forbid anyone from carrying out his daily work. They base their argument on Ibn Kathīr and al-Ṭabarī’s interpretation of *sūrat al-Jum‘ah* (62):10. Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 4:385-387. al-Ṭabarī, op. cit., 26:100-103.

tok guru might go to the students' lodging once again to check whether anyone remains sleeping. The *madrasah* or *balaisah*, is full of students lining up to perform the *ṣalāt al-fajr*. After the *ṣalāt al-fajr*, the *tok guru*, sitting on the floor, turns towards the students, and reads aloud from the books that are being studied which may be in either Arabic or *jawi*. This depends on how well-versed the *guru* is. If the text is in Arabic, the interpretation or explanation is made in Malay.

4.4. Routine Educational Life

The daily routine of the intellectual learning process in the *pondok* is normally divided into three sessions. First, is the morning session. This session covers at least two hours during which the teacher may read two *kitab*s. This session starts immediately after *ṣalāt al-fajr*. After the morning lesson, the students go back to their rooms and cook their morning meals. Some take their breakfast at the small coffee-house which is also the grocery nearby if any. During the rest period, the beginners as well as the elementary students may go to read certain *kitab*s under certain *kepala muṭā'la'ah*²⁵ (*tok guru's* assistants). These assistants are very helpful in reviewing what has been taught by the *tok guru*. The beginners usually study with these assistants in any subject they are

²⁵. The *tok gurus* are normally assisted by either ordinary teachers which are called *ustādh* or by senior students who are better known as *kepala Muṭāla'ah* (head of revision), *ketua muṭāla'ah* (leader of revision) or *ketua tela'ah* (leader of revision but pronounced according to a local dialect). See Omar, op. cit., p. 160; Rahim Abdullah, op. cit., p. 5; Madmarn, op. cit., p. 130; Mohd Sarim Haji Mustajab, "Islam dan Perkembangannya dalam Masyarakat Melayu di Semenanjung Tanah Melayu 1900-1940", MA Thesis, National University of Malaysia, 1975, p. 318 and Abdul Rashid Haji Ahmad, op. cit., p. 21.

pursuing under the *tok gurus*. The assistants are qualified for particular subjects. The beginners know what subject they need to review and to which assistant they should go to do their *muṭāla'ah* (reviewing), or under whom they want to practice.

The *tok gurus'* assistants must have an authorization from the *tok gurus* themselves, so that they can fully transmit the knowledge they learned from their respective *tok gurus* to the beginners. These assistants, after being considered qualified in certain subjects, are upon request given an *ijāzah*²⁶, the traditional certificate of authorisation, normally through oral wording such as: *Engkau wahai Muhammad, bolehlah mula mengajar* (You O Muhammad! are now allowed to teach)²⁷, or, *aku idhinkan engkau mengajar kitab fiqh/tafsir dengan berkat Allah Subhanahu wa taala* (I confer on you permission to teach the book of *fiqh/tafsir* with the blessing of Allah)²⁸. Speaking in a similar context, Fazlur Rahman writes :

the teacher, after giving his full course , personally gave a

²⁶. *Ijāzah* refers to an authorization or a license. When used in its strict technical meaning, this word means the third of the eight methods of receiving the transmission of a hadith. It means in short, the fact that an authorised guarantor of a text or of a whole book (his own work or a work received through a chain of transmitters going back to the first transmitter or to the author) gives a person authorization to transmit it in his turn so that the person authorized can avail himself of this transmission. But beyond this narrow definition there is in fact involved the principle, fundamental in Islam, of the pre-eminent value attached to oral testimony, a principle which has been maintained through all the fictions to which *ijāzah* and the other methods of transmission have given rise from a very early date and which still today continue to influence Muslim traditional thinking. See *EI*, 1971, (eds.) B. Lewis et. al., G. Vajda, s.v. "idjāza,". See also George Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges*, pp. 140-141.

²⁷. Abdullah al-Qari Haji Saleh, *Kelantan Serambi Mekkah*, p. 17.

²⁸. Madmarn, op. cit., p. 136.

certificate (*ijazah*) to the student who was then allowed to teach. The certificate was sometimes given in an individual subject--say *fiqh* or *hadith*. Sometimes it concerned several subjects and sometimes it was valid only for specified books which the pupil has read²⁹.

Ijāzah, in the first place, is not a common phenomenon in traditional *pondok* centres. It is not a result of an overall evaluation of each and every student's performance during their stay in the *pondok* centre, rather it is a token of appreciation by a *tok guru*, or a type of recognition for the sacrifices and struggles the student had made during his stay in pursuing knowledge at a particular *pondok* institution. Thus, like the *ijāzah* issued during the medieval period³⁰, it is issued at *pondok* in the name of a particular master of the *pondok* and there is no title or grades stamped on the certificate.

Ijāzah was not offered to anyone in the medieval period as a result of any examination sat by a particular student, because examination was not a common phenomenon as a method of evaluating students³¹. It is reported that it only once occurred in a medieval college, during the reign of Caliph al-Muqtadir bi al-Allah, that an examination was conducted. It was supervised

²⁹. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, p. 185.

³⁰. al-Abrāshī, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

³¹. *ibid.*

by Abu Sa'īd Sinān b. Thābit b. Qurrah (d.331)³², a professor of medicine, personal physician of the Caliph³³ and on top of that a chief medical officer of the Abbasid dynasty³⁴. It took place in oral form³⁵.

The second session of the learning process in *pondok* is the afternoon session. This session is usually conducted after *ṣalāt al-ẓuhr*. This session may continue up to the time of *ṣalāt al-ʿaṣr*. The break period starts after the *ṣalāt al-ʿaṣr*. The third, i.e. the last session of the day starts immediately after *ṣalāt al-maghrib*, and continues until the *ṣalāt al-ʿishāʾ*. This is the traditional routine of the *pondok* educational life in the various parts of the Malay Peninsula as well as in adjacent areas, especially in the southern parts of Thailand.

During the evening some students, the juniors and the seniors always, stay up late at night reviewing the subjects and memorizing what they have jotted down during the long day. Anyone passing by the *pondok* during the quiet hours of late evening may hear chanting tones or sounds of oral practice indicating the learning by rote of some texts. Rote learning and jotting down

³². Many professional positions especially medical during Umayyad as well as Abbāsīd dynasty were filled by Christians. Sinān was one of them. He remained a Christian throughout his service during the reign of al-Muqtadir billāh. However, he became a Muslim during the reign of al-Qāhir billāh. See Abū ʿAbbās Aḥmad Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, *ʿUyūn al-Anbāʾ fī Ṭabaqāt al-Aṭibbāʾ*, (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1987), 2:201; Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Yūsuf al-Qifṭī, *Kitāb Akhbār al-ʿUlamāʾ bi Akhbār al-Ḥukamāʾ*, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Mutanabbī, n.d.), p.130.

³³. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, op. cit., 2:202.

³⁴. al-Qifṭī, op. cit., p. 130.

³⁵. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, op. cit., 2:204.

the commentary on the margin or beneath the texts (better known at *pondok* as *ḍābiṭ*) are important features of traditional Muslim learning³⁶.

The development of the memory is a constant feature of medieval education in Islam³⁷. This technique is also observed in the *pondok* system just like what other people had done during the medieval period, as a universal feature of learning. Makdisi says:

Committing material to writing was recognized as most important in the process of learning. Memory alone was not to be trusted. Recording was also to be done from the mouth of the professors and from their works, and when their work was considered important, it was copied whole.

Muhammad b. Muslim b. Wara (d. 265/879), upon his arrival in Baghdad from Cairo, went to pay a visit to Ahmad b. Hanbal who asked him; did you copy the book of Shafi'i? Ibn Wara answered; No. Whereupon Ibn Hanbal admonished him, saying; you were remiss. We did not come to know the difference between the general (*ʿumūm*) and the particular (*khuṣūṣ*), statements in scripture, nor between abrogating (*nāsikh*) and abrogated (*mansūkh*) hadith until we had attended the lessons (and taken down the dictation) of Shafi'i. Upon hearing this, Ibn Wara turned back to Cairo and copied the work of Shafi'i³⁸.

³⁶. Madmarn, op. cit., p. 137; Rahim Abdullah, op. cit., p. 6; Awang Had Salleh, op. cit., p. 41.

³⁷. Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges*, p. 99.

³⁸. *ibid*, pp. 104-105.

Thus the methodology of *pondok* education in many parts of the Malay Peninsula was and is similar to the widely recognised system of the intellectual learning process among the institutions of higher learning in medieval Islam. We also see that most of the subjects taught in the *pondok* centres correspond to what has been taught throughout the history of Islamic institutions³⁹. The subjects of *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-fiqh*, *ḥadīth*, *tafsīr*, and *kalām* were taught in most Muslim institutions and are being taught in the *pondok* centres in the Malay Peninsula. In addition, subjects like *akhlāq*, *taṣawwuf*, *naḥw*, *ṣarf*, *balāghah*, *farā'id* and *manṭiq* are also offered in the *pondok* centres⁴⁰. However, it is very unfortunate that subjects which are classified as acquired sciences i.e. vocational and practical in nature are neglected at the *pondok* centres though they were popular during the medieval period of Islam. Subjects taught at mosques in early days of Islam were not limited to religious alone⁴¹. At the peak of the Medieval Islamic era, the curriculum of Islamic sciences comprised theology/religion and vocational⁴².

However, not all *pondoks* have the same specializations⁴³. Some may

³⁹. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, p. 188. See also Dodge, op. cit., p. 29.

⁴⁰. See the discussion in 4.5.

⁴¹. Shalabī, op. cit., p. 115.

⁴². Nakosteen, op. cit., p. 53; Faisal Othman, op. cit., p. 15. See also the discussion on the nature of religious sciences in Introductory Chapter, 8, pp. 21-22.

⁴³. See Khoo Kay Kim, "Malay Society", p. 186.

specialize in *naḥw* and the teacher is then known as *tok*⁴⁴ *nahu*. Another may specialize in *fiqh* and the teacher is called *tok faqih*⁴⁵, for instance Tok Faqih Abdullah⁴⁶ in Terengganu. Because of this specialization, students would normally move from one *pondok* to another in order to gain more knowledge in a specific field. Throughout the year, the phenomenon of students transferring from one place to another can be seen. In the cause of *ṭalab al-ʿilm* (seeking knowledge), students move from one place to another depending on the subject in which they want to specialize. The transferring regularly occurs among the junior and senior students. Here, Fazlur Rahman notes that students travelled over long distances, sometimes, over the length and breadth

⁴⁴. The epithet *Tok*, is an appellation used to show reverence equivalent to Sir (*tuan*) in English. Thus, a knowledgeable man in *naḥw* might be called *Tok Nahu*, a knowledgeable man in *fiqh* might be called *tok faqih*, a man who has skills in traditional medicine might be called *tok bomoh* and so on. See Omar, op. cit., p. 134. For detailed discussion please see Nagata, op. cit., p. 47. See also the discussion about the definition of the term *tok guru* in Introductory Chapter, 8, p. 21.

⁴⁵. The term *faqih* was used in the sense of doctor of the law, or student of law, particularly a graduate student, in contradistinction to *mutafaqqih*, used to designate the undergraduate. See *EI*, s.v. *Madrasa* p. 1124.

⁴⁶. In Kuala Brang, Ulu Terengganu, there emerged an influential *tok guru* who was widely-known as tok Faqih Abdullah, due to his wide knowledge in this field. His *pondok* was very well known and many of his students especially who in later times continued their studies in the government schools have occupied important positions in the government service. For instance, Shafi'e Abu Bakar (a Ph. D. holder) who is a prolific writer and a senior lecturer in the National University of Malaysia was one of them. He was under the guidance and instruction of this *Faqih* for almost three years from 1956-1959. His *pondok* was named *Madrasah Islāḥiyyah*. The *Faqih* passed away in 1963. One particular point to be noted here is that whenever a traditional institution was called a *madrasah*, it does not necessarily refer to the proper *madrasah* (school) as has been widely understood in the present day, but it can refer to a *pondok* centre which was named *Madrasah* so and so. See Shafi'e Abu Bakar, "Institusi Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Malik", p. 151; idem, "Faqih Abdullah dan Pondok Pengajiannya Di Kuala Brang" in Muhammad Abu Bakar, *Ulama Terengganu: Suatu Sorotan*, pp. 98-108.

of the Muslim world to follow the lectures of famous teachers⁴⁷. Moreover we learn that in those days not only the student but also scholars used to travel and undertook long journeys in search of knowledge; sometimes, an Iranian went as far as Spain and at other times a Spanish scholar was found studying in the extreme East⁴⁸.

During Medieval Islam this method of collecting knowledge, especially on a specific hadith, was a very popular phenomenon among students of Islam. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, has written a book specially devoted to this habit of Muslim Scholars⁴⁹.

4.4.1. Methodology of Teaching

The methodology of teaching observed and the learning at *pondok* is rather traditional, that is to say that there have been no changes in manners pertaining to this process of learning from the early days of its existence⁵⁰.

The basic idea of teaching in *pondok* is very simple. The most important task of the teacher is to read the text which has been predetermined and to

⁴⁷. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, p. 185.

⁴⁸. See the discussion in Chapter Two, 2.5.6., pp. 117-118 and 2.6.8., pp. 152-153. See also Shushtery, op. cit., p. 169.

⁴⁹. al-Ḥāfiẓ Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. ʿAlī b. Thābit well-known as al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (392-463AH). His book is entitled *al-Riḥlah fī Ṭalab al-Ḥadīth*, (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1975).

⁵⁰. Refer to the previous discussion in 4.2., p. 223 and Chapter Two, 2.6.5., p. 145.

give an explanation. Thus each and every student must have with him a specific book for that particular session. If the text is in Arabic, the teacher normally takes five steps in order to complete his teaching. Normally he starts with a short review of the previous subject in order to refresh the minds of the students and relates it to the present chapter. He then proceeds to read the text slowly in order to enable the students to put correct diacritical marks on their books. Later, he offers the grammatical analyses of the texts which they have just read. Subsequently, he translates some difficult words of Arabic into Malay and leaves words which in the opinion of the teacher are simple and known to the student. Then lastly the teacher gives a detailed explanation of the page or paragraph read by him. At this stage, the system looks like giving an explanation of an explanation which has been done by the writer of the books over the specific texts of the original writer⁵¹. For example, in the field of grammar, an explanation is given of the explanation (*sharḥ*) of Ibn ʿAqīl of the original texts of the grammar book written by his predecessor.

However, if the book read is a *kitab Jawi* it takes fewer steps to complete the teaching. Normally there are three stages which the students have to undergo in learning the texts. Apart from refreshing their minds with the previous lesson, the teacher will go straight to reading the text and giving them some elucidations they might need especially on certain portions which the teacher thinks suitable to be explained. Thus to complete a text in the

⁵¹. Please see the discussion in Chapter Two, 2.6.5., p. 145.

Malay language takes a shorter time than an Arabic book.

Keeping quiet is one of the ethics practised at *pondok* during the learning process especially if the teacher is the master of the *pondok*⁵². Normally the student would not ask the teacher at this particular time any word which he does not understand. They will ask the teacher before the teacher leaves the teaching building, or another choice for them is to get it explained by the ordinary teacher or any assistant teacher they prefer to go to.

Questions⁵³ are also put to the students throughout the instruction. However, this type of practice very seldom happens in *pondok* circles. Most of the time, students themselves refuse to question the *guru*, especially as it may cause interruption and may disturb the smooth running of the teaching. On top of that, they are frequently taught that a question posed to the *guru* may in some way show a sign of disrespect to the teacher or a type of challenge to his trustworthiness⁵⁴. In a very few *pondok* centres, the junior and the senior students may sit in the front rows and they are usually asked certain questions

⁵². Rahim Abdullah, op. cit., p. 6.

⁵³. This method includes the method of discussion. Not many *pondok gurus* dare to introduce this method of teaching to their students. Most of the Gurus prefer to read texts and explain portions which they think fit to be emphasized or might be confusing to students. Normally, question and answer sessions would be left to their assistants, be they called *ustadh*, *kepala Tela'ah* or other names according to local usage.

⁵⁴. For example, Tok Guru Haji Abdul Kadir of Padang Midin, Kuala Terengganu used to stop teaching whenever he was interjected. The information was given by Tuan Haji Mukhtar Haji Mohd, 04/06/93.

that might remind them of the linguistic structure involved in the reading. Questions might be repeatedly asked by the *tok guru*, calling upon certain students by name, from whom the correct detailed responses are expected. Questions are asked while teaching not only to know how far the students understand the texts and how closely they are paying attention to them⁵⁵, but also with the aim of observing how well the students are prepared and how well they are acquainted with other subjects that lead them to understand the texts. That is to say they are required to know subjects like *naḥw*, *ṣarf* and *balāghah*⁵⁶. During the golden days of Islam, teachers had to discuss the different subjects taught, hear criticism offered and answer and satisfy the students on all points raised by them⁵⁷. However, during this time, there was no regular system of education, nor a fixed syllabus, and each professor had his own method of teaching and syllabus⁵⁸. This is true in the case of the *pondok* education where the system, syllabus and methodology are really based on the preference of each *tok guru*.

Other methods were employed by a small number of the *tok guru* such as Haji Nik Abdullah Wan Musa, the founder of the methodology (*ṭarīq*) of

⁵⁵. Muḥammad ʿUthmān al-Muḥammadi, "Pondok: Benteng yang Masih Kebal", part 2, p. 14.

⁵⁶. Madmarn, op. cit., p. 125.

⁵⁷. Shushtery, op. cit., p. 169. See also, Madmarn, op. cit., p. 126.

⁵⁸. Shushtery, ibid., 164.

Shāh Walī Allāh al-Dahlawī from India⁵⁹, and Haji Abdullah Noh, a graduate from the Islamic college in Kushmir Gade' and Madrasah Aminiah Deoband, India⁶⁰. During their teaching they both sometimes employed the method of research⁶¹. This method is actually refers to a way of making deduction (*istinbāt*) from the two main sources of knowledge in Islam namely, the Qur'ān and the sunnah through a methodology practised by previous 'ulamā' especially *al-mutaqaddimūn*⁶². Students had to undergo training in stages before they were allowed to utilize this method of research. They were taught ways of reconciliation in matters that appear to be in conflict due to different opinions or understandings of previous scholars or due to obscure meanings of the sources. Later they would be allowed to come up with their own *ijtihād*⁶³. Of course this caused a great tension in the life of conservative 'ulamā' for the latter could not compromise with certain outcomes of the *ijtihād* of this group of 'ulamā', the young faction (*kaum muda*)⁶⁴. There was a great

⁵⁹. Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Hassan, "Sepintas Lalu Tentang Tariq Shah Waliyullah al-Dehlavi dan Pengalirannya ke Tanah Melayu, in Khoo Kay Kim et. al. (eds.), *Pendidikan di Malaysia Dahulu dan Sekarang*, (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980), p. 59 (hereafter cited as "Tariq Shah Waliyullah").

⁶⁰. Mohd Asri Yusuf, "Madrasah Balarulmubi Pasir Putih Kelantan", in *Malaysia dari Segi Sejarah*, No. 16, 1978, p. 41.

⁶¹. Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Hassan, *Sejarah Perkembangan Ulama' Kelantan*, (Kota Bharu: Pakatan Keluarga Tuan Tabal, 1977), p. 83 (hereafter cited as *Pakatan*); Mohmed Asri Yusof, op. cit., p. 45.

⁶². Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Hassan, "Tariq Shah Waliyullah", p. 59.

⁶³. *ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

⁶⁴. Roff, *Origins*, p. 67.

debate on issues related to theology⁶⁵ between this group and other groups in Malay society-the official religious hierarchy, the traditional Malay elite, and the rural *ulama*, collectively the "Old Faction," or "*Kaum Tua*"⁶⁶.

It was very rarely in the history of the *pondok* that the teacher utilized the method of story-telling⁶⁷. It was reported that only Tok Kenali used to use this method frequently during his teaching at his *pondok*. Once he is reported to have related to his disciples a story about an al-Azhar graduate belittling an *imām* of a mosque in his village. The *Imām* in return told the congregation to gain blessing (*barakah*) from the learned student by plucking a hair each from the beard of the student. When the latter related the story to his teachers at al-Azhar they felt humiliated and said " you have indeed gathered knowledge but you have not learned the techniques and strategy (*siyāsah*)"⁶⁸. He also wrote stories about the importance of politics and techniques in calling people to Islam. Some of them were published in *Pengasuh*⁶⁹, a fortnightly journal issued by the Majlis Ugama Islam Kelantan

⁶⁵. For detailed discussion, see Muhammad Salleh b. Wan Musa (with S. Othman Kelantan), "Theological Debates: Wan Musa b. Haji Abdul Samad & His Family", in William R. Roff (ed.), *Kelantan, Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 153-169 (hereafter cited as "Theological Debate").

⁶⁶. Roff, *Origins*, p. 67.

⁶⁷. Refer to Chapter Two, 2.5.2. and 2.6.1. iv.

⁶⁸. Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, "Tok Kenali dan Pendekatannya dalam Berdakwah", in Abdul Halim El-Muhammady (ed.), *Dinamika Dakwah*, (Kuala Lumpur: Budaya Ilmu Sd. Bhd, 1992), pp. 189-190 (hereafter cited as "Tok Kenali").

⁶⁹. *ibid.*

where he became principle honorary editor⁷⁰ and *al-Hidayah* where he used to be consulted for his opinion and advice by its chief editor, Ahmad b. Ismail⁷¹.

Munāẓarah in the sense of *jadal* (debate) was totally banned unless in a very unusual situation where the *tok gurus* get themselves involved. For example, a great debate between the young faction and the old faction of 'ulamā' regarding the issue of dog's saliva in Kelantan in 1937 was held at the King's palace⁷². The King took the initiative to hold the debate due to the popularity of the issue among his subjects. He in fact was in favour of the *Kaum Muda*, propagated by Haji Nik Abdullah b. Wan Musa⁷³.

All in all, the teaching process at *pondoks* is monotonous; that is, the teacher gives and the students listen and memorize without doubt. Anything the teacher gives is considered true⁷⁴.

4.4.2. The Art of Memory.

⁷⁰. Abdullah al-Qari b. Haji Salleh, "Tok Kenali: His Life and Influence", in William R. Roff (ed.), *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 93 (hereafter cited as "Tok Kenali"). See also Mohd Sarim Haji Mustajab, op. cit., p. 316.

⁷¹. Abdullah al-Qari, "Tok Kenali", p. 94.

⁷². Nik Abdul Aziz b. Hj. Nik Hassan, "Perbahasan Tentang Jilatan Anjing: Suatu Perhatian", in *Islam di Kelantan*, (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1983), pp. 58-65 (hereafter cited as "Perbahasan"). See also Wan Musa, "Theological debate" and note 65 above.

⁷³. Nik Abdul Aziz, *ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

⁷⁴. Rahim Abdullah, op. cit., p. 6.

Memorization has played a very important role in the learning process at *pondok*. In some *pondok* centres, the *pondok* management has laid it down that in the first three years students must attend such a formal memorization class after the ‘*ishā*’ prayer. The minimum time spent for the memorization class is one and a half hours every night. This is in order to regulate their ability to memorize what they have learnt during the daytime. At Pondok Pasir Tumbuh the students have to memorize two language texts; i.e. the *Ājurrūmiyyah*, a compact grammar book written by Muḥammad b. Ājurrūm and the *Alfiyyah* of Muḥammad b. Mālik, the famous Andalusian grammarian⁷⁵.

For this class students are divided into groups. Each group consists of five to eight students. Each student is asked to read aloud and repeat the lines to be memorized. They repeatedly do this in chorus until they memorize the words. This drilling process of learning is repeated time and again until they memorize all the sections or rhymed verses of the books. This learning by rote process is supervised by a teacher. In order to become familiar with this material they have to do the same at their *pondok*, normally before they go to bed or immediately after they wake up early before dawn⁷⁶. If they manage to learn the assignment by heart, they will be allowed to memorize the next

⁷⁵. Omar, op. cit., pp. 182-3.

⁷⁶. *ibid.*

portion. Thus their memorization is incremental from the beginning to the end of the books⁷⁷.

4.5. Subjects and Textbooks

The subjects and textbooks taught at the *pondoks* vary according to the expertise of the *tok gurus* concerned, such that some *pondoks* emphasize certain subjects which may not have been mentioned by other *pondoks*. Further the textbooks used in one and the same subjects might be different according to the personal preference of each individual *tok guru*. Nevertheless, there are common subjects and textbooks shared by all the *pondoks*. These are reflected in the charts provided in the coming pages. Of all the subjects, the Qur'ānic lesson occupies a prominent place in the *pondok* curriculum.

Initially the Qur'ānic lesson had been a pivot of Malay knowledge. However, religious education does not mean only learning the Qur'ān by rote. There were *pondok* schools and other patterns of learning apart from pure Qur'ānic classes⁷⁸. In some remote areas Qur'ānic reading was taught by parents. Sometimes there was other knowledge taught together with the Qur'ān, such as manners of prayer, fasting and other basic knowledge which ought to be mastered by Muslims including manners of purification,

⁷⁷. *ibid.*

⁷⁸. Khoo Kay Kim, "Malay Society", p. 186.

determination of dos and don'ts, lawful and unlawful and rewards and sins⁷⁹. Later, when there had been a respected knowledgeable person in a village, children were sent to his house for Qur'ānic classes and other basic knowledge which were called *farq' ayn*⁸⁰. If the number of children increased, the classes would be moved to bigger places such as *suraus* and mosques. When *pondok* institutions were established, some of the zealous students of Qur'ānic classes attended their circles. Upon their return from *al-riḥlah fī ṭalab al-ʿilm*, they started teaching religious subjects such as *tawḥīd*, *fiqh* and others at *suraus* or mosques. At the same time, Qur'ānic classes were still run either at homes or at the same *suraus*. To ease the attendance of the students the classes were separated by different times⁸¹ though *fiqh* and *tawḥīd* classes at the mosques were normally attended by adults. It is evident that the Qur'ānic classes were meant for the children in their very early days. If a child attended *pondok* education when he had missed the Qur'ānic class at his local level he would not be recommended to attend its *ḥalaqah* until he had completed the Qur'ānic circle at the *pondok*. Actually, the recitation of the Qur'ān is not the concern of the *pondok* institution. It is very rare to find a *pondok* centre offering this very basic knowledge of a Muslim. However, there is an *intiḳāliyyah* class meant for teaching the bases of Islamic subjects including the Qur'ān at Pondok Pasir

⁷⁹ Md. Jani Naim, "Sekolah Agama Rakyat di Sabak Bernam hingga 1945" in Khoo kay Kim (ed. et al.), *Islam di Malaysia*, (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980), p. 52.

⁸⁰. *ibid.*, p. 54.

⁸¹. *ibid.*

Tumboh in Kelantan and a *kelas farḍu ain* (*farḍ 'ayn* class) at Pondok Moden Kerandang in Besut Terengganu. Of course this type of class would not be run by the masters of the *pondoks* for they are merely considered remedial classes⁸². By comparison, the class is comparable to the present day religious kindergarten.

In the early days of Islam, the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* were the only popular subjects focused on by the companions of the Prophet⁸³. Therefore, when the companions scattered away from the centre of Muslim administration at Madinah after the demise of the Prophet, they utilised these two sources of knowledge in order to cope with the new problems they faced⁸⁴. Unlike the early days of Islam, at present the most popular subject at *pondok* level is *fiqh*, then comes exegesis of the Qur'ān or hadith followed by the others⁸⁵. Even during teaching the Qur'ān or hadith, sometimes *fiqh* issues

⁸². Interview with Tuan Guru Haji Najmuddin Muhammad of Pondok Moden Kerandang on 05/06/1993. See also Azmi Omar, op. cit., p. 179. For the detailed discussion see 4.2.1., p. 225.

⁸³. al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, 1:163-164, 172-173.

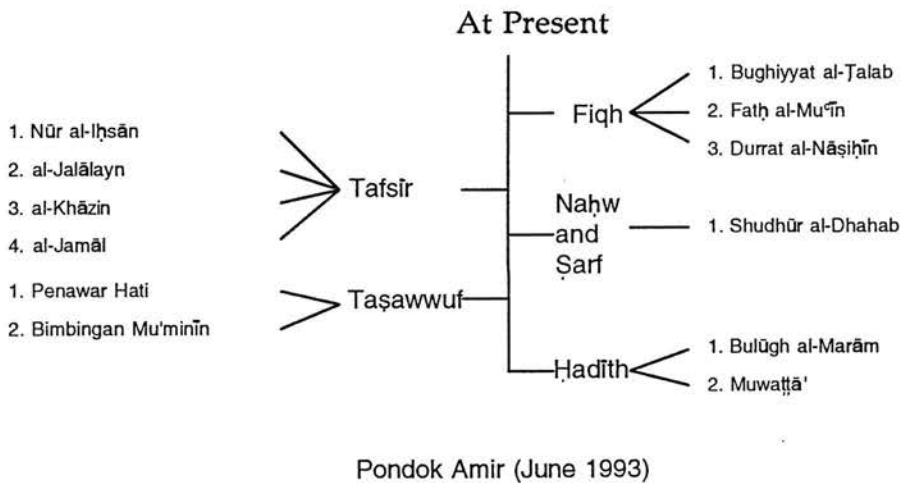
⁸⁴. This tradition probably follows the *sunnah* of the Prophet in sending teachers outside his town centre to disseminate knowledge. Before his migration to Madinah, the Prophet used to send Muṣ'ab b. Umayr and Ibn Umm Maktūm, to teach his few followers there. Sending teachers outside Madinah was one of the main features of the policy of the Prophet such as to Bi'r Ma'ūnah, Najrān and Yemen. For further discussion see Mohammad Mustafa Azmi, *Hadith Literature*, pp. 3-5.

⁸⁵. Interview with Tok Guru Haji Daud b. Abdul Rahman, Dungun, 04/05/93. In this regard, among other things which Wan Zahidi Wan Teh suggests for the reformation of the *pondok* is to name the centre *tafaquh* college, taking into account the popularity of the subject of *fiqh* at *pondok* circles. See his article "Pengemaskinian Sistem Pengajian *Pondok* di Pulau Pinang", *Pendidikan Islam Malaysia*, (Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1992), p. 117. See also in this case Shafie Abu Bakar, "Ke Arah Pembaikan", pp. 37-38.

are the focus of discussions and explanations.

Though texts and books used at these *pondoks* vary from time to time and from one *pondok* centre to another, technically speaking, they come from the same stock. They do not depart from the books taught, in earlier times, in various famous *pondok* centres in Terengganu, Kelantan, Patani and at Masjid al-Ḥarām at Mecca⁸⁶.

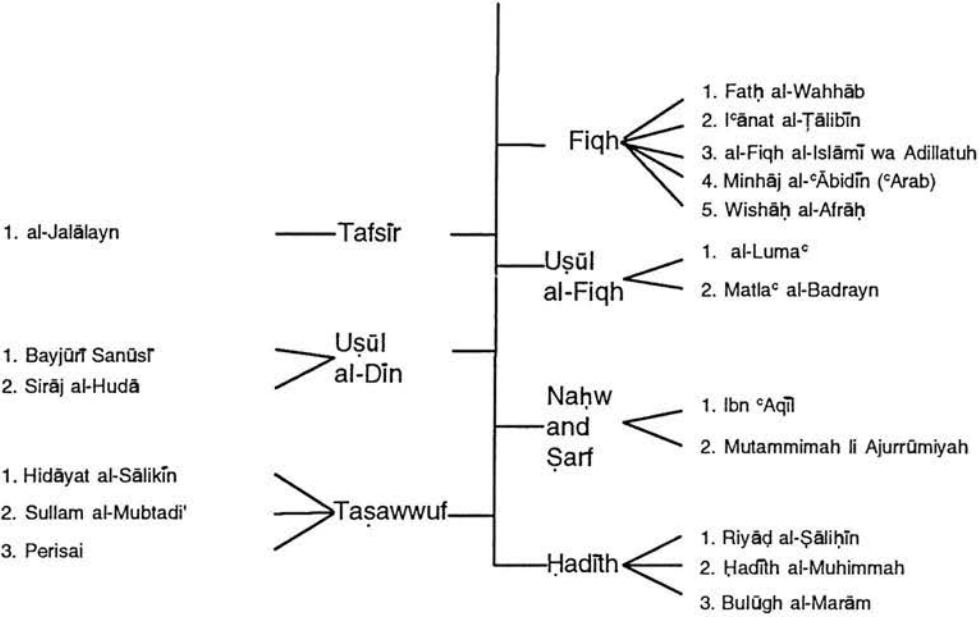
The following chart depicts books used in *pondoks* at various times (i.e., the past and the present)⁸⁷.



Source : Tok Guru Haji Husin, 5th June 1993

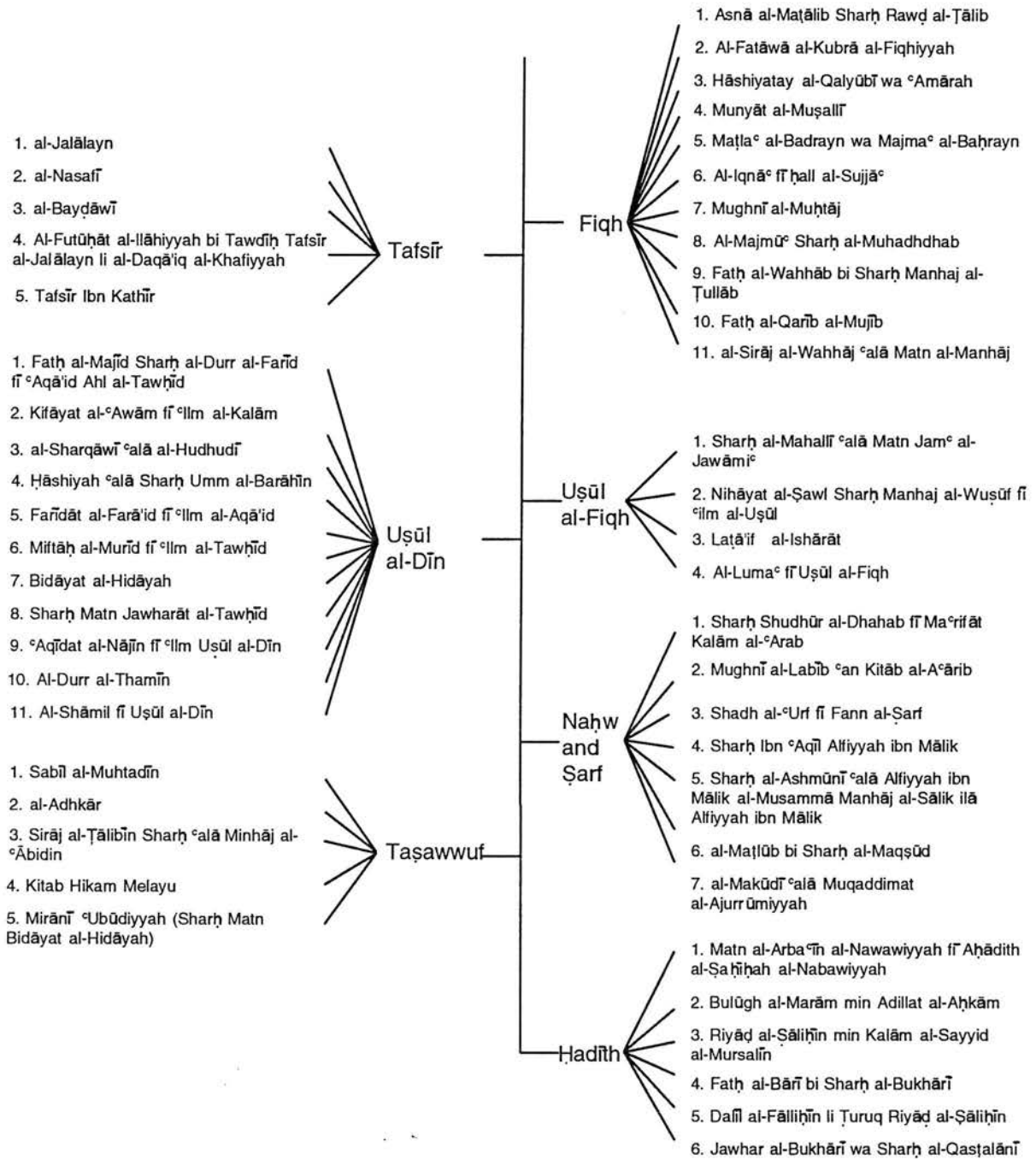
⁸⁶. T. W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1979, p. 411.

⁸⁷. The *Jawi* books used at *pondoks* have been listed by Mohd Nor Ngah in his book entitled *Kitāb Jawi; Islamic Thought of the Malay Muslim Scholars*. Some of the books taught in the *pondok* are also used in the *pesantren* in Indonesia. Some of the books are mentioned and analyzed by Martin Van Bruinessen, under the title, *Kitab Kuning: Books in Arabic Script Used in The Pesantren Milieu*, published by the Journal of the Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology in 1990. Here the author spells *pesantren* with the letter "e" whereas the Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam spells it with "a", thus *pasantren*. See for the spelling, Chapter Three, p. 213 note 136.



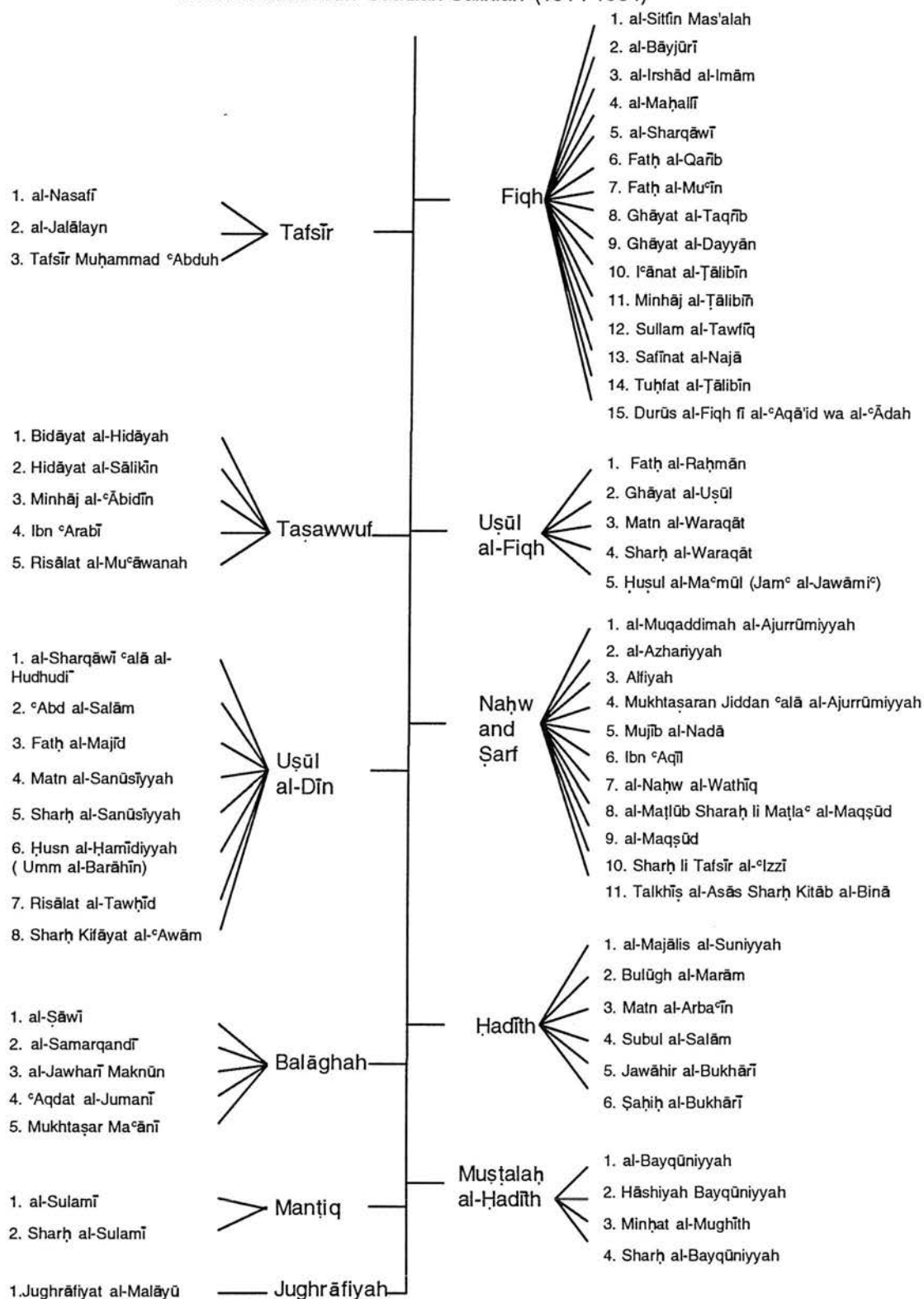
Source : Tok Guru Haji Najmuddin, 5th June 1993

Pondok Madrasah al-Bakriah



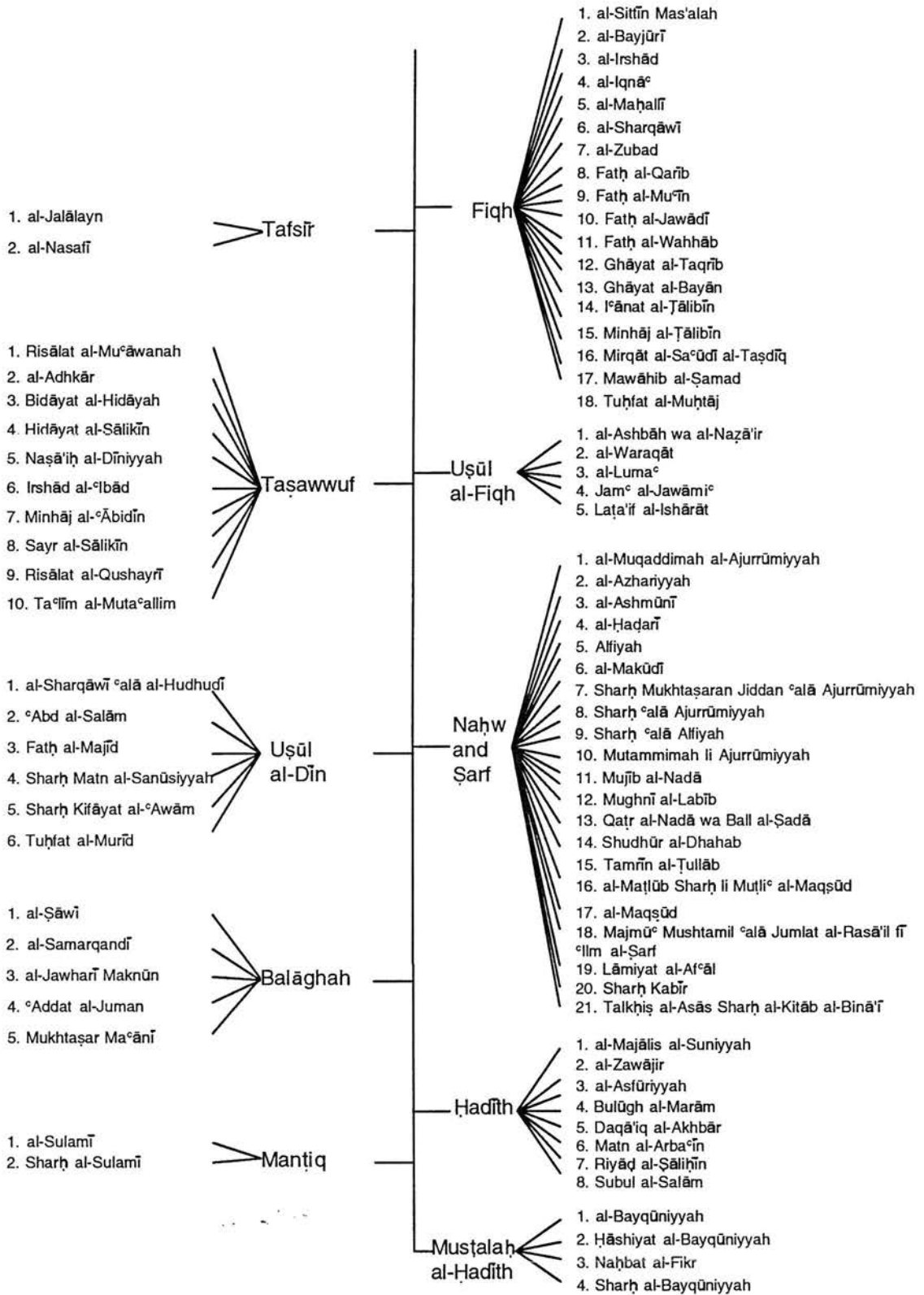
Source : Omar, "In Quest of an Islamic Ideal of Education".Appendix C.

In the Past
Pondok Madrasah Saadiyah-Salihiah (1914-1934)



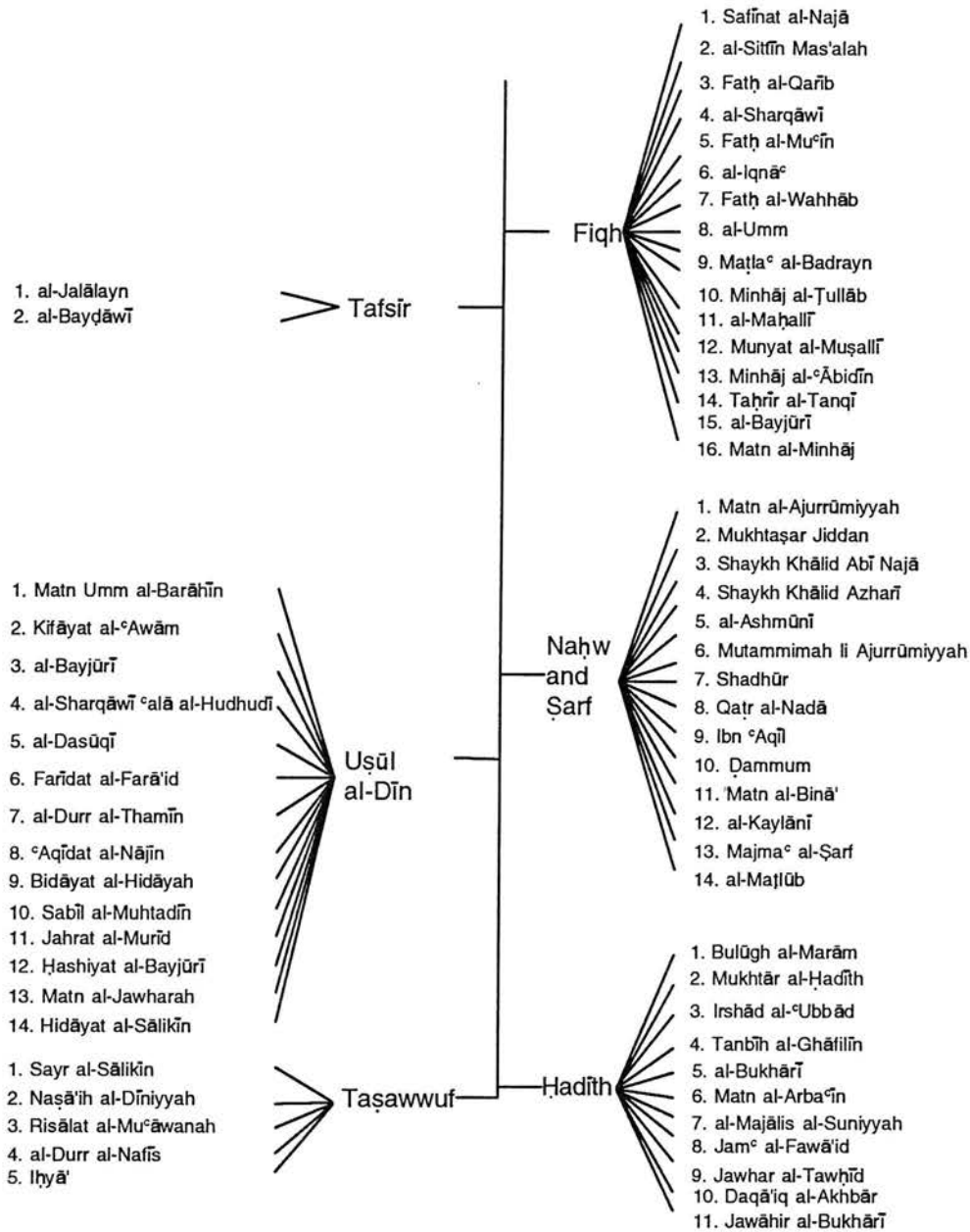
Source : Badriyah Haji Salleh, *Madrasah Saadiyah Salihiah*, pp. 130-132.

Pondok Madrasah Ahmadiyah (1931-1958)



Source : Rahim Abdullah * Pelajaran Pondok di Kelantan*, pp. 15-17

Pondok Haji Mat Shafi'i, Losong. (1940)



Sources : 1. Tok Guru Haji Daud Abdul Rahman 4th May 1993

2. Tok Guru Haji Muhammad Mohd Noh (Haji Mat Pulau) 5th May 1993

3. Che Alias Haji Mamat , "Haji Mat Shafi'i" , p. 80.

4.6. Conclusion

As a great system during its golden days, the *pondok* had its own structure, not only in its microcosm but also in its relation with the outside world. The system which was basically home-based tended to emerge as a self-contained entity while the society developed fast around it. Thus, the original style of *pondok* teaching which was solely based on the Meccan open *‘umūmī* system was developed into a system where the grouping of students according to their ability became a basis, hence the *nizāmī* system. The system was incorporated in some *pondok* centres started by Pondok Pokok Sena, Butterworth, which later on turned into a proper *madrasah* known as Madrasah Khairiah Islamiah and Pondok Madrasah al-Jawawiyah al-Arabiyyah, which later on turned into a proper *madrasah* known as Madrasah Sa’diah Salihyyah, Temoh, Perak in 1935. However, at centres where the system is preserved, such as Pondok Pasir Tumbuh, Kelantan, and Pondok Moden Kerandang, Besut, the *ḥalaqah* method has remained unchanged throughout. Recently, the elementary system which was called *farq’ayn* or *intiḳāliyyah* class, or *kuttāb* as in the case of Medieval Islam, was introduced into the *pondok* system. All the systems are in fact amalgamated in order to maintain the product of the *pondok* at the high standard of the glorious past, so that they become well-versed in understanding texts, strong in belief and commitment toward Islamic traditional teaching and always adhering to ethics or *ādāb* in their daily socialization. However, in matters related to the challenges of modern realities, it seems that they are incompetent. The reason

for this failure has been the long standing problem, i.e. its negative attitude in incorporating the subjects of the acquired sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyyah*) into the *pondok* milieu, since they were too far removed from the golden days of Islamic intellectual endeavour in Medieval Islam. Furthermore, even in its traditional milieu, there was no profession in the society that required and encouraged such a thorough training in the Islamic sciences. Thus, it was not a prerequisite for a person to comprehend those sciences much less to teach them at *pondok* in order to obtain the title of *tok guru*. On top of that, the *tok gurus* preferred only to preserve the typical *ḥalaqah* method with which they were familiar and which is in fact suitable only for theoretical lessons. In order to analyse the idea more deeply I will discuss this issue along with other elements that are related to it, separately in the following chapter.

Methodology of Teaching at *Pondok*: An Analysis

5.1. Introduction

This chapter is a combination of the theory and practice of Islamic education as elaborated in the previous four chapters. The importance of this chapter lies in the fact that it attempts to analyse the existing variations in the *pondok* system and to suggest changes which need to be introduced in order to bring it back to the original basis of Islamic education as practised during the pre-fourth century A.H. Education during that time was considered the apogee of Islamic education, since it followed the Prophetic methodology of teaching. For during the Prophet's time, subjects other than the so-called "pure religious" were also taught¹. Such "other subjects" were also considered an integral part of the Islamic educational package. This idea continued to be practised till the end of the fourth century- that is in the heyday of the Niẓāmiyyah² and Mustanṣiriyyah³. However, after the said period denominational fractionalism led to the setting up of a multitude of factional *madrasahs*, which paved the way for the steady decline in Islamic education by closing the door for fresh *ijtihād* and refusing to tolerate any innovative ideas.

¹. Refer to Introductory Chapter, 8, pp. 21-22 for the definition of the term "religious subjects".

². For detailed discussions see Chapter Three, 3.4., p. 184-185.

³. See Chapter Three, 3.4. p. 186.

This trend continued its onslaught on Muslim intellectual circles till the end of the seventh-eighth centuries. Since then the *madrasahs* began to concentrate on teaching subjects which they thought were of great importance for the spiritual needs of the community. Thus they failed to incorporate subjects which were not considered "purely religious". This trend began to take firm root in Mecca. Thus Malay scholars who went to Mecca were highly influenced by the Islamic educational methods and subjects taught there and brought home the same. These methods and subjects, upon our analysis, could no longer meet the changing requirements and aspirations of the present and future Malay society. For this reason, the researcher feels the need for a thorough change in the *pondok* system in Malaysia whereby the classical/prophetic methodology of teaching could be reapplied in the modern environment. Thus this chapter consists of nine sub-titles which are inter-related to one another. The researcher feels that such a classification will prove the essential link with the methodology of teaching as discussed in this thesis. Therefore, the study will focus on the following:

5.2. Variations in *Pondok* System

In the course of studying various *pondok* institutions, the researcher found that, even though the epithet *pondok* is given to all these traditional institutions, it does not mean that they are all similar in their practices and

lifestyle. Their ideals vary according to different centres⁴. Several observations can be drawn from the patterns of learning process undergone by the students at these institutions.

Based on the past and the present educational practices and life styles upheld at *pondoks*, after having undergone several changes and reformative periods, they now could be categorised into several groups as follows:

5.2.1. Traditional *Pondok*.

There is no compromise in dealing with methods and curriculum in this type of *pondok*. Strict observation of the traditional educational style is upheld. They are not affected by the changes which take place in their surroundings. Whenever they are faced with different values projected by the outside community, they try their best not to adopt these, at least in their microcosm. Emulating the conducts and behaviours of their preceding *shaykhs* is considered to be precious, and this is a knowledge they feel proud to inherit. Pondok Amir at Besut is worth mentioning as representing this group⁵.

⁴. Khoo Kay Kim, "Perkembangan", p. 8. See also 5.4., p. 276 where the mobility of students at *pondoks* is said to have been high due to their interest in *tok gurus'* specialities and the textbooks taught at the centres. For detailed discussion on this refer to Chapter Four, 4.4., pp. 241.

⁵. For instance, among the beliefs and doctrines which they subscribe to is that Arabic is difficult. There must be an *ilhām* from God, otherwise one cannot master the language. Perhaps this rigid and literal interpretation was referred to Imām al-Shāfi'ī's saying that; knowledge is a light of God. Thus it would not be given to a sinful man (instead of a man who is to be guided). Interview with Tok Guru Haji Hussin of the *Pondok*, June 05, 1993.

5.2.2. *Pondok Moden*

The founders of this type of *pondok* feel dissatisfied with the surrounding developments, especially with new technologies and systems adopted by the government schools. In order to attract people to their *pondok* and to compete with them, changes have been made especially to the physical structure of the *pondoks*. Facilities are given to the students. *Pondok* buildings have been modernized. In certain localities, the buildings are no longer built by individual students or their families. The authorities of the *pondoks* provide the building and some basic facilities to the students. The *pondok* buildings no longer consist of small huts but have been built as a long house. Units are standardized. There are specific units for male students, married couples and elderly students as well as a special unit for female students. Curriculum and books read at these *pondoks* are slightly different from the traditional ones. Subjects like arithmetic, reading and crafts, especially calligraphy, are added. Agriculture is now regarded as an integral part of the curriculum. The addition of these subjects and activities can be seen at Pondok Moden Kerandang, Besut, Terengganu and Pondok Sungai Durian, Kuala Krai, Kelantan⁶.

5.2.3. *Pondok-School System*

In this type of *pondok* both the traditional and modern features are given

⁶. Interview with Tuan Guru Haji Hussin on 05/06/1993.

equal importance. Most of the features of the *pondok* are no longer traditional in the strict sense. The curriculum of the *pondok* is fully overhauled and it looks like the *madrasah* system in many ways. Pedagogically speaking, reading instruction, which is the salient feature of the *pondok*, is very little observed. Less emphasis is given to the technique of memorization. To this category belong *pondoks* like Madrasah al-Khairiah al-Islamiah or Pondok Pokok Sena, Kepala Batas, Seberang Perai, Pondok Bunut Payung, Kelantan, nowadays well-known as Madrasah al-Ahmadiyah, and Madrasah Saadiyah-Salihiah at Kampong Temoh, Perak.

5.3. Methodology of teaching

Pedagogically speaking, there are not many changes. Most of the orthodox *pondoks* remain unchanged in techniques and approaches to teaching. Reading and stressing on learning by heart is still prevalent. However, in the modernized *pondoks*, the methodology of teaching varies according to the needs and creativity of the chief *guru*. For instance, in Baling, Kedah, some *pondoks* have reformed their educational life, especially in the methodology of teaching⁷.

Teaching instruction is a situation that relies on two activities; reading and dictation. The former is the most common method of teaching at *pondok*

⁷. For example, Pondok Pulau Pisang reformed itself in 1951 and Pondok Banggul Berangan (*Madrasah Miṣbāḥ al-Falāḥ*) made itself modern in 1982. See Mohd Napiah, "Pengajian Hadith di Institusi Pondok: Satu Kajian di Daerah Baling, Kedah", *Islamiyyat*, Vol.10, 1989, pp. 34-35.

centres. The reading method at *pondok* denotes certain interrelated activities. The *tok guru* reads the text which has been pre-determined. Then it is followed by explanation and at odd times, questions from the students. This method of teaching coupled with attitudes towards the *tok guru* led to the feeling that not even a single word of his should be lost. Students became almost parrot-like. Any idea uttered by the *guru* was regarded as valid and acceptable⁸. Thus memorizing texts, especially grammar texts, was the most ordinary phenomenon in the educational life of *pondok* students. Although this might lead to a passive attitude on the part of the students, they were knowledgeable enough and had a strong faith in what they had memorized. Very seldom did they deviate from the path of previous scholars' *ijtihad* even in a trivial matter. They gave serious consideration to whatever was ascribed to the Prophet and his companions, and most of the time they understood the teaching literally. The problem would arise when they were faced with new issues that were not stated in their texts or had never been taught by the teachers. Most of the times they left them to others to solve. However, some *tok gurus* tried to solve the problems through their own understanding or by consulting other *tok gurus* whom they considered more knowledgeable than themselves⁹.

⁸. Rahim Abdullah, op. cit., p. 6.

⁹. For instance, Tok Syekh Duyong was considered a consultant in his time. Many other '*ulamā*' consulted him in matters and problems they could not solve. Even the sultan of Terengganu, Baginda Omar was one of his students and used to consult him in matters related to his administration. See Mohammad Abu Bakar, "Tok Syekh Duyong", pp. 161-163.

Dictation¹⁰ is considered a very rare phenomenon at *pondok*. This is because dictation here signifies lecturing from one's own mind and thus comes close to *ijtihād*. Not many *gurus* dare to give lectures from their memory and their own words¹¹. Almost all read from the pre-determined texts, or at least from their own writings. The most outstanding example of this kind of method of teaching was employed by Tok Kenali, the legendary *pondok guru* in Kelantan. According to Khoo Kay Kim, he adopted a very modern approach towards religious education. He often taught without the use of the religious texts and held regular question-and-answer sessions with his pupils¹². This teaching activity marked his great yearning and high standard of knowledge and strong memory.

In Islamic tradition, many great scholars of Islam utilised dictation (*imlā'*) which signifies the use of the scholars' own ideas that marks the use of their own *ijtihād*. It was very well practised during the time of *al-salaf* and in the early period of *al-khalaf*. Contrary to this, reading from the text signifies *taqlīd* (imitation) of other scholars' opinions¹³. This imitation syndrome had been a misfortune that befell the Muslims since the fourth century *Hijri* (10th.

¹⁰. See the discussion in Chapter Two, 2.6.1., pp. 126-128.

¹¹. Please refer to Chapter Two, 2.6.1. viii. Cf. 2.6.1. i. where an *impromptu* lecture (*muḥāḍarah*) is distinguished from dictation (*imlā'*) though in both cases the teacher does not read from texts.

¹². Khoo Kay Kim, "Malay Society", p. 187.

¹³. al-Shaybānī, op. cit., p. 422.

century AD). Some consider this a landmark of the closing door of *ijtihād*¹⁴ in the fourth century AH that led to general stagnation of both legal and intellectual sciences, especially of the former¹⁵. From this time onwards, there was only a handful of scholars who were considered *mujtahids*, practising *imlā'* as a method of teaching¹⁶.

Other methods were employed by a small number of *tok gurus* such as Haji Nik Abdullah Wan Musa and Haji Abdullah Noh. They both sometimes employed the deductive method (*istinbāṭiyyah*)¹⁷. This method actually refers to a way of making deductions (*istinbāṭ*) from the two main sources of knowledge in Islam namely, the Qur'ān and the sunnah through a methodology practised by previous 'ulamā', especially the *mutaqaddimūn*¹⁸. Students were taught ways of reconciling matters that appear to be

¹⁴. *ibid.*, p. 423.

¹⁵. The intellectual sciences (theology and religious thought) suffered and became impoverished because of their deliberate isolation from, and the gradual decay of, secular intellectualism. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, p. 186.

¹⁶. The reason for the campaign for the closing of the door of *ijtihād* was mainly because of the factional sentiment and strong political allegiance amongst various Islamic religious groups. Thus, it is not surprising that during this time while Islam began to decline the number of schools of higher learning increased and flourished, for the colleges were almost all denominational and supported by leaders of various schools of thought. Knowledge was geared towards purely religious subjects. Vocational and practical training were neglected. According to Nakosteen, religious and literary studies and Arabic grammar and language dominated the subject matter at the expense of philosophy, science and social studies. These colleges were intolerant of innovation, suspicious of secular studies and aloof from creative scholars. See al-Shaybānī, *op. cit.*, p. 423; Nakosteen, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

¹⁷. Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Hassan, *Sejarah Perkembangan*, p. 83; Mohd Asri Yusuf, "Madrasah Balarulmubi", p. 45. For the detailed discussions refer to Chapter Two, 2.6.2. pp. 128-129. See also 2.5.7. pp. 118-120. Cf. with the practice at *pondok* centres in Chapter Four, 4.4.1. pp. 245-247.

¹⁸. Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Hassan, "Tariq Shah Waliyullah", p. 59.

in conflict, and later they would come up with their own conclusion which is their *ijtihad*¹⁹.

As I have mentioned in the previous chapter²⁰ it was not a common phenomenon at *pondok* centres that teachers utilized the method of storytelling²¹. It was reported that Tok Kenali used to use this method frequently during his teaching session at his *pondok*²². In this way the *tok Guru* tried to emphasize the importance of observing manners in criticising others even during teaching time²³ and more so the strategy and technique in preaching Islam to people. The arts of handling the people are important.

The method of question and answer is seldom observed by *tok gurus* during their *halaqah* session at *pondok*²⁴. In most cases, to question a *tok guru* is considered a taboo, let alone to challenge him especially in front of a crowd, because it would have been considered disgraceful, uneducated and immoral. However, it has been a common phenomenon for the *tok guru* to question his

¹⁹. *ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

²⁰. See Chapter Four, 4.4.1. PP. 247-248.

²¹. Cf. with the principles, practices and norms of Islam in Chapter Two, 2.5.2. pp. 94-110 and 2.6.1. (iv) pp. 123-124. Due to the importance of this method Islam gives great emphasis to it. However, it was nearly ignored at the *pondok* centres.

²². For the detailed discussion refer to Chapter Four, 4.4.1. pp. 247-248.

²³. Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, "Tok Kenali", p. 190.

²⁴. For the detailed discussion about this refer to Chapter Four, 4.4.1. pp. 244. It is against the methodology of teaching from Islamic perspectives as has been elucidated in Chapter Two, 2.5.3. pp. 111-112, 2.6.4. pp. 130-137.

students to evaluate their understanding of a subject taught by him. A good student of *pondok* is one who has a high respect for his master to the extent that he would not have disputed his statements²⁵. The illustration given by Nakosteen of the situation of the *halaqah* in Baghdad during the golden days of Islam, where an inquiring student, who greeted the great teacher with a devoted *salām* (bow) often ended the day with an intellectual fist fight with his master in defence of some principles or refutation of others²⁶ would never be encountered in *pondok* circles²⁷. Though some masters encouraged questions and answers during their session, this was actually a rarity in the *pondok* system. The task of the master was to read books and to give explanations of parts which he felt were in need of elucidation. The task of the students was to accept what had been explained by the master²⁸. Of course this would result in a passive attitude among the students on one hand, but on the other hand it inculcated in the hearts of the students the attitudes of politeness and respect for the teachers and older people. However, this attitude is in actual fact contradictory to the teaching of the Qur'ān and the Prophetic traditions,

²⁵. Awang Had Salleh, op. cit., p. 38.

²⁶. Nakosteen, op. cit., pp. 41-42. Detailed discussions on this refer to Chapter Two, 2.6.4. pp. 134-135. See also 2.6.5. pp. 143-145, about the methodologies of al-Shāfi'ī and al-Ṭabarī.

²⁷. Awang Had Salleh, op. cit., p. 38.

²⁸. Rahim Abdullah, op. cit., p. 6. This attitude is clearly against the teaching of Islam and early practices for the necessity of understanding and analysis was by no means ignored by the Muslims. al-Zarnūjī for example has stressed the importance of *al-fahm* (understanding). According to him the student should not write anything which he does not understand. Instead, he should think on what the teacher says and think over the matter while he is learning. See al-Zarnūjī, op. cit., pp. 136-137. Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., pp. 478-479. See further discussions on this as has been mentioned in note 24 above.

as both always stress having polite discussions and questioning. There was a great and a remarkable tolerance of different views. As such, it does not mean that question, discussion and to certain extent debate would tarnish the dignity of the teacher nor would it lead to a harsh attitude on the part of the student and make him lose respect for his master. Indeed, it will only do so if the teacher is incompetent. In this case, why should he take on this great task in the first place if he is not a true *‘ālim*, for being a true *‘ālim* is one of characteristics of the *pondok’s guru*²⁹. The most important thing here is that both parties have to subscribe to *ādāb al-ikhtilāf* (the etiquettes of disagreement) . The purpose of observing such manners is to protect the dignity of the human being and preserve the sense of *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood)³⁰, to the extent that even if a *mushrik* seeks protection, it is obligatory upon a Muslim to grant him protection³¹. Wāṣil b. ‘Aḡā’ was saved from being killed by a group of *Khawārij* for the latter had still upheld this Qur’ānic value³².

In *pondok* circles a few masters tried to develop this attitude in their

²⁹. Awang Had, op. cit., p. 44. According to ‘Ābid Tawfīq al-Hāshimī being knowledgeable (*‘ālim*) is one of the three main factors of success in teaching. The other two are strong personality and having a skill in teaching. See ‘Ābid Tawfīq al-Hāshimī, *Ṭuruq Tadris al-Dīn*, (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 1974), p. 26-34.

³⁰. al-Qur’ān constantly encourages people to observe praiseworthy traits and to practise good etiquettes in dealing with people in many places. The whole *sūrah* of *al-Ḥujurāt* (49) is dedicated towards building good *ādāb* among people.

³¹. In *sūrat al-Tawbah* (9):6 we read, if one amongst pagans ask for asylum, grant it to him, so that he may hear the word of God and then escort him to where he can be secure.

³². al-‘Alwānī, op. cit., pp. 5-6 citing al-Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil fī al-Lughah wa al-Adab*, 2:122. See also the discussion in Chapter Two, 2.6.4. pp. 134-135.

students but it seems that it was not fully developed. The masters felt very content with the tradition of no questioning. The researcher himself has experienced this situation many times.

The concept of the hadith *al-su'āl miftāḥ al-ʿilm*³³ is not that popular in the *pondok* method of teaching. Though in some *pondoks*³⁴ questions are allowed to be posed to the masters, it is a bit superficial for the questions are meant to get further elucidation rather than having discussions and revision of the validity of any statement either by the teacher or of notes from the book. Much less should one question the suitability and applicability of ideas written in texts that might only be suited to the conditions and times of the author or his references. Thus, the answer from the master is rather absolute and decisive³⁵ though deep in the questioner's heart he is not satisfied with the response.

Contrary to this, according to the tradition of Islamic education, *munāẓarah* (disputation) is regarded as valuable and helpful in inculcating a

³³. al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 1:16 & 32-33.

³⁴. For instance at Pondok Madrasah Ahmadiyyah, Bunut Payong, Kelantan, which was better-known as Pondok Bunut Payong, questions were allowed to be posed to the *tok guru* (the master of the *pondok*) himself. In most cases, *tok gurus* preferred it to be discussed with assistant teachers or their aides (*kepala muṭālaʿah*). For the detailed discussion refer to Chapter Four, 4.4.1., pp. 244-245. See also Rahim Abdullah, op. cit., p. 6.

³⁵. Rahim Abdullah, *ibid.*

strong personality³⁶. However, as I have mentioned before, question and answer sessions that include disputation, had been nearly dishonoured in *pondok* circles. *Munāẓarah* in the sense of *jadāl* (debate) was totally banned unless in a very unusual situation where the *tok gurus* get themselves involved³⁷.

At Pondok Madrasah Saadiyah-Salihiah, Temoh, oratorical competition (*majlis al-khiṭābah*) among students was allowed only after the *Pondok* adopted the school system in 1934³⁸.

Due to the above practices and norms, students of *pondoks* are comparatively rather passive in their thinking³⁹. Their custom is to follow the teaching without much hassle. They are staunch imitators (*muqallidūn*) of the later scholars (*al-khalaf*). Even in the practice of the most basic tenet of Islam; alms giving (*zakāt al-fiṭr*) once a year, they utter the word *taqlīd* during making *niyyah*⁴⁰ in the absence of the staple diet, rice, which is replaced by money⁴¹.

³⁶. For the details see Chapter Two, 2.5.3. pp 111-112 and 2.6.4. pp. 130-137, especially of pp. 134-135, and 2.6.5. pp. 144-145 as opposed to the practice at *pondok* as mentioned in the following note.

³⁷. For detailed discussion about this method at *pondok* see Chapter Four, 4.4.1. pp. 248.

³⁸. Badriyah Haji Salleh, op. cit., p. 53.

³⁹. Rahim Abdullah, *ibid*; Azmi Omar, op. cit., p. 187, Faisal Osman, op. cit., p. 10; Sabri Haji Said, *Madrasah al-Ulum al-Syariah Perak 1937-1977*, (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1983), p. 36.

⁴⁰. *Niyyah* is one of the basic elements in performing any obligation in Islam. It is based on hadith " *innamā al-a'māl bi al-niyyāt*" which means (the validity of any worthy) action relies on the intention (of the performer). See al-Nawawī, 13:53-54; cf. Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, op. cit., 1:163-165 where the narration is without the word *innamā*.

For example, they say, "*inilah zakat fiṭrah yang wajib atas diriku bertaqlidkan Imām Bulqīnī kerana Allah Ta'ālā*" which means "this is my obligatory alms due imitating (the *ijtihād*) of Imām Bulqīnī (sincerely) for the sake of God". They dared not question this double imitation for Imām Bulqīnī himself was a Shāfi'ite.

*Ijtihād*⁴² is something alien to them. The door of *ijtihād* is closed in the *pondok* milieu with the exception of one or two cases⁴³. Memorizing and imitating information from books is absolute. It is normal for a student to go on learning books time and again page by page from the same master. They did not see any harm in this *Ḥijāzī* method⁴⁴ of repeating the lesson time and again. However, at the present day, this practice is not that popular amongst the *pondok* adherents⁴⁵.

5.4. Subjects and Texts

Syllabus as well as textbooks are closely connected with methodology

⁴¹. Money is not a type of staple diet, and obviously it is not a type of food. According to the Shafi'ite school of law which is officially practiced by the Malays, alms giving must be in the form of staple diet; which in the case of the Malay Archipelago is rice. If this cannot be met for one reason or the other, it can be replaced by its value. The value is measured by money. So money is allowed to become the almsgiving in the absence of rice. Since this is the *ijtihād* of Imām Bulqīnī, one is obliged to utter this.

⁴². For the meaning of *ijtihād* and *mujtahid* see the discussion in Introductory Chapter, p. 7, note 8. See also Chapter Two, 2.5.7., p. 119, 2.6.1., viii and 2.6.4., pp. 136-137.

⁴³. See Chapter Four, 4.4.1. pp. 246 and 248.

⁴⁴. Awang Had Salleh, op. cit., p. 38.

⁴⁵. Interview with Tok Guru Haji Hussin, 05/06/93.

of teaching⁴⁶. It is not an exaggeration to say that they are the main factors in determining kinds of methodology of teaching. In this regard, one noteworthy point to be mentioned in relation to *pondok* education is insufficient exposure to various types of subject and books, which has an implication on the methodology of teaching and the pattern of thinking of its graduates. The failure of the *pondok* system to incorporate the subjects of the acquired sciences into the *pondok* milieu was due to the non familiarity of *tok gurus* with the subjects and their books and sources. This will add to the crisis of quality and types of the product of the *pondok* system because they are, according to Faisal, not able to contribute to the development of society and nation from Islamic point of view⁴⁷.

As for the Qur'ānic lesson, we find that portions of the Qur'ān have to be memorized by the children. The idea is to help them, at least in performing their daily obligations where they have to read portions of it. It is shameful for a boy if he cannot memorize the thirtieth part (better known as *juz' 'amma*) of the Qur'ān. For the Malays, other portions are commendable to be memorized for it would place the memorizer at par with the respected figures or dignitaries.

Indeed, the Qur'ānic classes in the past were run hand in hand with

⁴⁶. Tibawi, *Islamic Education*, p. 213.

⁴⁷. Faisal Osman, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

other religious subjects though sometimes at different times. Thus it is incorrect to say that religious schools or religious education in the past comprised merely the learning of the Qur'ān⁴⁸. Shafie argues that even before the emergence of secular schools in the Malay Peninsula promoted by the colonials, the educational system had been long established by a great number of 'ulamā' such as Shaykh Abdul Malik bin Abdullah at Pulau Manis in Terengganu⁴⁹.

Moreover, the type of books used depends on the specialities and skills mastered by the master or the *tok guru* of each *pondok* centre⁵⁰. He teaches the books which had been taught by his former masters and normally would never go against this established norm. Thus a student has to move from one *pondok* centre to another in order to make himself conversant with as many fields as he desires. Therefore the number of students wandering around many *pondok* centres is high⁵¹. For example in the past, people, especially

⁴⁸. Khoo Kay Kim, "Malay society", pp. 184 and 188. Shafie totally disagrees with the idea that the oldest educational system in the Malay Peninsula was the Qur'ānic classes. Much more because the idea is solely based on the report of Abdullah Munshi in *Hikayat Abdullah*. To him the oldest educational system in the Malay Peninsula was *pondok* education. For detailed discussion please refer to his article "Ke Arah Pembaikan" pp. 24-25. Cf. this issue with his and other scholars' ideas about the dispute over the first *pondok* institution established in the Peninsula which still remains obscure in Chapter Three, 3.7.2., pp. 211-213 and 215-216.

⁴⁹. Shafie Abu Bakar, "Institusi Shaykh Abdul Malik", pp. 135-136. In his article "Ke Arah Pembaikan", pp. 25-26, he lists up some *pondok* institutions in the past established in Patani, Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, Perak and Seberang Prai. See also the similar list in Ismail Haji Ishak, op. cit., p. pp. 175-177.

⁵⁰. See the discussion in Chapter Four, 4.5., p. 250.

⁵¹. See the discussion about this in Chapter Four, 4.4., p. 241-242.

Kelantanese, would go to Tuan Tabal⁵² if they felt like having a deep knowledge of sufism (*taṣawwuf*), asceticism (*zuhd*) and sufi orders (*ṭarīqat*)⁵³. Likewise, people would attend the circle of Haji Nik Zainal Abidin for reciting the Qur'an, the circle of Haji Wan Taib for Islamic Jurisprudence and the circle of Tok Kharasaan⁵⁴ for Islamic Philosophy⁵⁵ and many others⁵⁶.

It is very important to note here that majority of the students nowadays prefer to study books written in Malay script, i.e. *kitab jawi* instead of Arabic books⁵⁷. This means that few of the *pondok* students are now confident in

⁵². Haji Abdul Samad Muhammad Salleh al-Kelantani, born in 1840 and died in 1891. The name Tuan Tabal was given to him because he was born in Tabal and brought up in Tabal, a place on the borders of Kelantan and Thailand. He was brought up in a pious family and educated by his own father who at that time was the *imām* at his place. After having been educated in basic religious knowledge, he then went to Besut, one of the districts in Terengganu to further his study. Though some researchers believe that he went to Patani, Thailand instead of going to Besut, Terengganu, on the basis of a survey made by a researcher from the National University of Malaysia in 1976, we are convinced that he went to Besut. Later he left to Mecca, a last destination for many *pondok* teachers in the quest of knowledge. See Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Hassan, "Tokoh Ulama", pp. 22-25.

⁵³. Indeed, Tuan Tabal was a specialist on these fields apart from having wide knowledge on *fiqh*, Arabic and *Uṣūl al-dīn*. It is said that he was prone to the ascetic life since his childhood. He established his *pondok* at Jalan Tok Semian, Kota Bharu, Kelantan. See Khoo Kay Kim, "Malay Society", p. 186; Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Hasan, "Tokoh Ulama", p. 24.

⁵⁴. His actual name was Abū Abdullah Syed Hassan b. Nor Hassan, originally from India. He settled in Kelantan but his date of arrival here is not known to people. However, in 1917 he was found at Kota Bharu, Kelantan. He died in 1934. Some researchers prefer to call him Tok Khurasan. This probably due to the influence of the name of Khurāsān, a province in Iran where many great Muslim figures and scholars had originated. For Example, Nik Aziz Nik Hasan, "Tokoh Ulama", pp. 34-37 prefers the latter. Others might call him Tok Khose or Krosang because of the different Malay dialects. Interview with Tok Guru Haji Mat Pulau (Haji Muhammad b. Muhammad Nuh) of Losong Atap Zin, Terengganu, 04/05/93. See for the epithet of *tok* in Chapter Four, 4.4., p. 241. See also Shushtery, op. cit., p. 175.

⁵⁵. Khoo Kay Kim, "Malay Society", p. 186.

⁵⁶. See Ihsan Hardiwijaya Ibaga, op. cit., Mei, 1979.

⁵⁷. Please refer to the list of books studied at present time in Chapter Four, 4.5.

learning by using Arabic sources. This phenomenon is contradictory with the old days of *pondok* education where Arabic texts were used directly in the class and the principal teacher provided instant translation to the students⁵⁸. As a result the quality of the present product or graduates of the institution is questionable and thus their prospect is gradually declining and deteriorating.

5.5. The Survival of the *pondok*

The *pondok* institution survives on the reputation and charisma of its teacher⁵⁹. Once the teacher had passed away without an able successor who could match the ability of the deceased or at least his popularity, it would result in the dispersal of the students from the *pondok*. In extreme cases the *pondok* will be closed down in the absence of an able successor. There are many such examples, the most outstanding being the closure of Pondok Tok Kenali, the most famous *pondok* institution in Malaysia in the early twentieth century. His students were not only drawn from people throughout the Malay Peninsula, but also from many parts of Southeast Asia, such as Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia. The same was the case with Pondok Tok Pulau Manis in Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu. Tok Pulau Manis was a legend in Terengganu. All the *orang besar* (dignitaries), including the Sultan of the state used to study under him. It has been recorded that the Sultan took one of his daughters to be his wife in order to show the greatness and high status Tok

⁵⁸. Andaya, op. cit., p. 233.

⁵⁹. For the basis of the discussion see Chapter Three, 3.7.2., pp. 217-218.

Pulau Manis merited from people. Though he was the Sultan's father-in-law, he was in no way influenced by the life of the palace; instead he played a vital role in forming and advising the Sultan in his administration⁶⁰. Despite surviving for more than two and half centuries, i.e. until 1389AH/1969AD, his institution had to be closed down due to the non-availability of a suitable reputable successor⁶¹ to teach therein⁶². Many other centres were also closed down for the same reason throughout the country.

In order to maintain the reputation and the survival of the *pondok*, the *tok guru* normally chose the brightest and most intelligent student to replace him if he had no sons who were capable of shouldering the responsibility. At times the *Tok Guru* would get this would-be *tok guru* married to his own daughter, so that, as his son-in-law, the young *guru* would continue to teach at his *pondok* after the former's death and act as his heir. In the tradition of the *pondok* institution, ladies have no role to play with the exception of one or two modern *pondok* centres. A glaring example is the Pondok Pasir Putih, Kelantan, the biggest *pondok* centre at present, where none of the ladies take part in teaching. The daughter of the chief *guru* is married to the would-be

⁶⁰. Sultan Zainal Abidin 1 of Terengganu ascended the throne in 1138H/1725AD. Shafie Abu Bakar, "Institusi Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Malik", p. 98.

⁶¹. This institution was started sometime around 1103/1693 and ended up in Padang Midin in 1389AH/1969AD with the death of his last successor Haji Embong b. Haji Ismail. See Shafie Abu Bakar, *ibid.*, pp. 32-33, 87 and 99.

⁶². What is meant by the phrase "Institution of Shaykh Abdul Malik" in Shafie's research is not only limited to the *pondok* during Shaykh Abdul Malik's time but the institution founded by him until its closure in 1389H/1969AD. See Shafie Abu Bakar, *ibid.*, p. 33.

teacher⁶³. However, in some modern *pondoks*, like Pondok Moden Kerandang in Besut, Terengganu, five lady teachers play important roles in teaching *nizāmi* circles. Two of them are wives of the chief *Guru*, one of them is the chief *guru*'s sister and there are two others. It is even suggested that, sometimes, the *guru* became influential through his marriage with a dignitary of a state or became a father in law of a dignitary or he was a good friend of an influential figure of the state. By this means he managed to give advice and had some control over the administration, especially things related to Islamic Law. For instance, Tok Pulau Manis is said to have married a daughter of a dignitary of the state of Terengganu, Tok Kilat, who administered the downstream region of Sungai Terengganu upon returning from Mecca⁶⁴. After his fame spread throughout the state and the Peninsula, the Sultan of Terengganu, Sultan Zainal Abidin I, who was crowned in 1138H/1725AD, studied religious subjects from him and subsequently took the *tok guru*'s daughter as his wife⁶⁵. During his reign, it is said that the *Sultan* and other dignitaries of the state were reported to have studied under Tok Pulau Manis.

⁶³. According to the family tree, the father Abu Bakar had two sons (Abdul Aziz and Mustafa) and a daughter (married to his assistant). Later Abdul Aziz's daughter as well as Mustafa's daughter married their assistants Abu Bakar Othman and Atiqullah respectively. These sons-in-law of these two *gurus* (Abdul Aziz was considered the chief for he was the eldest) would take their place as heir after their death. This phenomenon was understood by the present inhabitants of the *pondok* as if the *gurus* had made an indirect proclamation of their successors. Thus, the students should give respect to them as they had to the former *gurus*. By doing this the *pondok* would survive. See Omar, op. cit., pp. 150-154.

⁶⁴. Shafie Abu Bakar, "Institusi Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Malik", p. 99.

⁶⁵. Buyung Adil, *Sejarah Trengganu*, p. 16. See also Shafie Abu Bakar, "Institusi Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Malik", p. 98; and Omar, op. cit., p. 128.

Thus, it was not surprising that Tok Pulau Manis had a great influence on the *Sultan* and the latter always referred to him any difficulties especially in religious matters.

Kyai Salleh, the Founder of Pondok Madrasah al-Umumiah al-Jawawiah, later Madrasah Saadiah Salihiah, was a close friend of *the Orang Besar* (dignitaries) of the District of Batang Padang and later made a friendship with the Sultan of Perak. The *Orang Besar* officiated at the first phase of his *madrasah* (school) in 1949 while the *Sultan* officially opened its second part in 1955⁶⁶.

The idea of maintaining the smooth running of the *pondok* and at the same time preserving the existence of the centre led the founder to set up many other smaller *pondok* centres. The chief *guru* would assign one of his assistants to lead the teaching in the newly established *pondok*. Thus they were linked with the main centre in which the founder conducted his lessons. This, in a way, shows that *gurus* at other smaller *pondok* took him as the point of ultimate reference. The more well-known the *pondok*, the more expansive would be its kinship ties with other *pondok* leaders. It becomes clear from what has been mentioned above that any *pondok* established anew did not mean that it was new, rather it was a continuation of the cultural and religious heritage

⁶⁶. Badriyah Haji Salleh, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

of a previous *pondok*⁶⁷. It so happened that one of the modernized *pondok* centres at Kampong Lalang, Padang Rengas, Perak had eight branches opened up in various other *kampongs* in the vicinity⁶⁸. In Temoh, Perak also, a *pondok* centre which was set up in 1914 by Kyai Haji Salleh by the name of Madrasah al-Umumiah al-Jawawiah, previously known as Madrasah al-Arabiah had at least three branches in the surrounding areas, one at Kampong Haji Ariff, established in 1919, another at Kampong Haji Dahalan opened in 1927 and the third at Kampong Tengah Sungai Lesong, about two miles from the master *pondok* at Kampong Temoh. The teaching staffs at these branches were provided by the central *pondok*. However, this central *pondok* was modernized in 1934 due to the urgency of maintaining the survival of the *pondok*. It had two systems; the traditional as well as the formal *madrasah* (school system), and was known as Madrasah al-Saadiyah. In 1955 its name was changed again due to the enrolment of girls as students and to officialize another new building. Even though these two systems were run by the same man, Kyai Haji Salleh, at the same time and the administration was centralised, apparently the preference was given to the Madrasah al-Saadiyah al-Salihiah (the school) over Madrasah al-Umumiah al-Jawawiah (the *pondok madrasah*)⁶⁹. In Kedah, Tuan Hussain b. Haji Muhammad Nasir, well-known as Tuan

⁶⁷. Omar, op. cit., p. 98.

⁶⁸. Khoo Kay Kim, "Malay Society", p. 189.

⁶⁹. Badriyah Haji Salleh, op. cit., pp. 6-10.

Hussain Kedah, established seven *pondok* centres upon returning from Mecca in 1896. One was at Alur Ganu (1897), another at Bohor (1900), later at Merbok, Pantai Merdeka (1912), then at Selengkoh (1920), at Sungai Limau, Batu 16 Padang Lumat (1924), all in Kedah and at last he stationed himself at Pondok Pokok Sena (1929), Seberang Prai permanently until his death⁷⁰. He established one centre after another when he felt that the centre had strong support from the people and had enough students to survive, with the exception of Pondok Kampong Selengkoh, which he closed down after it had been there for four years due to its unstrategic location. He moved out from the state of Kedah to Seberang Prai, in the state of Penang after he got involved in a controversial issue with one of his contemporary ‘*ulamā*’, who at that time was *Shaykh al-Islam* of Kedah, over the permissibility of teaching sufi orders (*ṭarīqat*) to the masses⁷¹.

5.6. *Pondok* Manners

Generally speaking, the inhabitants of *pondok* institutions are morally

⁷⁰. Halim b. Man, op. cit., pp. 104-105. Haji Mustafa Mohd Isa, op. cit., pp. 397-405.

⁷¹. According to Tuan Hussain, the way *Shaykh al-Islam*, Haji Wan Sulaiman Wan Sidek propagated his *ṭarīqat*, Naqshabandiah Mujaddiah Ahmadiyah was wrong. To him it should not be disseminated to the masses. Any *ṭarīqat* is actually meant for the knowledgeable persons. Thus, it should be propagated only to selected people. Due to his stiff opposition to this *ṭarīqat*, it received a gloomy welcome from among laymen especially in rural areas. Upon this, the *Shaykh al-Islam*, having authority in his hands, tried to stop this objection by introducing a law which made compulsory upon any one who teaches or would like to teach any religious subject in Kedah to get a letter of permission from him. Tuan Hussain refused to be bound by this law which he considered a type of humiliation to him, but in the end he had to pull out from Kedah in defending his principles. Haji Mustafa Mohd Isa, op. cit., pp. 457-458. Halim b. Man, op. cit., p. 105.

upright. Most of the students are highly-disciplined and respectful to people especially their teachers and the elderly. Most of the time they try to abstain from committing evils. They are occupied with memorizing texts, observing prayers, cooking and revising lessons. At times they have *mudhākarah* among themselves. Thus it is rare in the history of *pondok* education that students behave in bad manners such as stealing, insulting people and the like or in the language of Muḥammad ʿUthmān al-Muḥammadī "perangai tidak terkawal" (conducts and behaviours which are beyond control)⁷². The most that might happen is making fun with spying on people in the same *pondok* centre⁷³. This is virtually the implication of the emphasis on *akhlāq* from the student's enrolment day. It is evident when we learn that the enforcement of *akhlāq* matters is carried out by the *tok guru* himself. If this matter were taken lightly the *tok guru* would not have enforced it himself. This implementation is considered part and parcel of the learning process at *pondok* in addition to the formal teaching or lecture in *ḥalaqah*. Once it was related to me that at one occasion, several naughty inhabitants of a *pondok* centre in Kelantan were wandering around at midnight and spying on a couple in their hut. It so happened that the *tok guru* had his regular inspection. He hit upon them while they were spying on the couple. They were asked to give up their spying. Believing that the *tok guru* was one of their friends (they could not see him

⁷². Muḥammad ʿUthmān al-Muḥammadī, "Institusi Pondok", p. 14.

⁷³. Even this only applies to a very small number of them. See the following story which was related to the researcher by one of the former students of a *pondok* in Kelantan.

properly as there was no night light) they asked him to keep quiet and hold up his head to share the spying. As they held his head, they were surprised for the head had no hair and they started looking at it properly. At once the *tok guru* switched his torch on, and they jumped in fright for they could see the shiny head of the man. They realized by then that the man was the *tok guru* because he was the only one who was completely bald at the *pondok* centre.

Due to their emphasis on *akhlāq* and praiseworthy traits some of them went so far as to practise an ascetic life. Of course this would have given less social problems but would have led to less socio-economical production as well. Other than this, they would have made good citizens.

Among the *akhlāq* taught and promoted at the *pondok* is to respect teachers⁷⁴. They generally accept the teaching without doubt. Though in a way this would produce a passive kind of personality, it also shapes students to be obedient and respectful to their teachers. Too much questioning would cause less respect. Thus keeping quiet during the study session is dominant among *pondok* students⁷⁵. This happens not only during the process of teaching in the *ḥalaqah* where the students hardly question or challenge their

⁷⁴. This teaching is based, among other things, on the teaching of al-Zarnūjī in his *Kitāb Taʿlīm al-Mutaʿallim Ṭarīq al-Taʿallum*. See al-Zarnūjī, op. cit., p. 113.

⁷⁵. For further discussion about this attitude see Chapter Four, 4.4.1., p. 244.

teachers' credibility and knowledge⁷⁶, but it is applied also outside of the class. Some of the students, especially the juniors, even try to keep themselves distant from the *tok guru* out of respect to him⁷⁷.

5.7. Facilities at the *Pondok*

Sadly the *old-fashioned pondok* has no truck with teaching facilities. This is probably due to their masters' zeal to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors which they had learnt during their academic sojourn in Mecca. It has been observed that the Meccan *ḥalaqāt* in Masjid al-Ḥarām until today have no teaching facilities.

The Qur'ān does not at all prohibit the utilisation of educational aids and facilities. The case of the murder of Hābīl indicates the possibility of using teaching aids in whatever forms. It portrays the ideas of the crows teaching Qābīl how to bury the remains of his brother⁷⁸. According to ʿAbdul-Raḥmān Ṣāliḥ ʿAbdullāh, this type of visual demonstration of a skill whose acquisition was possible only after the learner was involved in watching its performance gives the idea that Islamic education will make use of audiovisual methods

⁷⁶. Rahim Abdullah, op. cit., p. 6. cf. the concept of *talqīn* where the students repeated the passages after their teacher, in a parrot-like fashion during medieval Islam. See A. H. Fahmy, op. cit. pp. 112-113. See also the discussion in Chapter Four, 4.4.1., pp. 244-245.

⁷⁷. In a photography session at Pondok Moden Kerandang on 05/06/93, the students refused to get themselves pictured together with the *tok guru* and the researcher until they were invited many times by him. The researcher was told later on that their refusal was out of respect to the *tok guru*.

⁷⁸. *Sūrat al-Mā'idah* (5):31.

and other appropriate measures of this kind⁷⁹. It means that educational aids are welcomed and encouraged in Islamic education. It is a shock when we find that Ḥijāzī circles did not pay attention at all to this particular important procedure in transmitting knowledge as if all students were at the higher level⁸⁰ where they are able to use their power of imagination. The Qur'ān also encourages people to undertake journeys in pursuit of knowledge either from a particular scholar or by contemplation of the creations of God or the ruins of earlier civilizations. Mūsā was portrayed as having made a long journey in order to learn something from a man who was said to have been more knowledgeable than him⁸¹. Various suggestions and advices to men to think and ponder over God's signs and power convey the ideas of a teaching methodology which suggests the use of the senses in addition to verbal symbolism⁸². It gives us room to use observation and the use of the senses. Thus in Islam, education is not solely acquired via verbal communication, i.e. lectures, talks and instruction, but it will similarly be acquired with teaching aids and facilities and through co-curriculum activities. Surprisingly, to some *pondok* masters, all of this sort of thing is considered foreign and therefore, not to be introduced at *pondok* circles.

⁷⁹. 'Abdullāh, *op. cit.*, p. 185. For the detailed discussion see Chapter Two, 2.5.5.

⁸⁰. In the high level class, the teacher read from a prepared manuscript or text, explaining the material and allowed questions and discussion to follow the lecture. This is the formal delivery of a lecture without involving teaching aids. Nakosteen, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁸¹. *Sūrat al-Kahf*(18):60-82.

⁸². *Sūrat Muḥammad* (47):10.

5.8. Strengths and Weaknesses of the *Pondok* Teaching

The methodology of teaching in medieval Islam⁸³ was known as the *halaqah* system. However, in the case of traditional Malay education the *halaqah* system was better known as "sistem pengajian pondok" (*pondok* educational system). The traditional educational system in Islam, like any other educational system, has its strengths and weaknesses especially in facing new developments of the present day life. *Pondok* education too has its strengths and weaknesses. In the following pages an attempt is made to present such strengths and weaknesses with a view to recommending measures which are necessary for bringing *pondok* institutions in line with present day demands. Thus a study will be done as follows:

- i. Strengths and weaknesses of the system
- ii. Strengths and weaknesses in the methodology of teaching.

5.8.1. Strengths and Weaknesses of the System

- i. Duplication of Some aspects of the *Madrasah*

In many aspects the *pondok* duplicated the characteristics of the *madrasah* especially with regard to the methodology of teaching, the physical organization and to a lesser extent the promotion of a particular Islamic school of jurisprudence. Similar to *madrasah* the *pondok* gave moral and religious training highest priority in its programme. Unlike *madrasah*, unfortunately, the

⁸³. Wan Zahidi Wan Teh, "Pengemaskinian Sistem Pengajian Pondok di Pulau Pinang", in Ismail Ab. Rahman (ed.), *Pendidikan Islam Malaysia*, (Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1992), p. 106.

pondok taught only *Pelajaran Agama* (pure religious subjects) as if education in Islam is religious education *per se*⁸⁴.

However, within its role as religious institution, the *pondok* institution helped to preserve and maintain the traditional structure of the society, and turned it into a system with logical hierarchical values. Thus the coordination of social action in a traditional society was possible because of the value attached to the *pondok* and a common concept of life.

ii. Training

At *pondok* students are independent. They are self-reliant so that each and every aspect of life will be taken care of by the individual on his own. No other people will do daily duties such as cooking food, washing clothes or other things, and even the hut will have been built by the student⁸⁵ with the help of his family or older friends⁸⁶.

The students learn at the *madrasah* building where they perform their prayers. This has a great impact on their lives. They practise what they learn at the same place. The cleanliness of the place is protected from impurities,

⁸⁴. See Chapter Four, 4.4., pp. 240.

⁸⁵. In the case of Pondok Moden Kerandang, the accommodation was ready before students were enrolled into the centre. Interview with Tok Guru Haji Najmuddin, 05/06/93.

⁸⁶. Noor Haliza Nih, "Peranan Institusi Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Memupuk Kesedaran Politik di Terengganu Sebelum Merdeka", Academic Exercise, Dept. of History, National University of Malaysia, 1989/90. See also Shafie Abu Bakar, "Ke Arah Pembaikan", pp. 30-31.

physically and spiritually. Ethics of conduct are strictly observed. They are taught how to deal with the elderly, teachers, parents and their fellow students. It is very seldom for one to find bad habits among *pondok* inhabitants. Students are expected to have "built-in control" discipline⁸⁷ and thus each and every member of the centre is aware of what he should and should not do. Indeed, life at the centre is imbued with *ādāb* (manners). Further, *pondoks* train their inhabitants to rely on God alone⁸⁸.

iii. Method, Time of Study and Facility

Obviously students learn in *ḥalaqah* and they seat themselves crosslegged. There are no clear-cut classes of students. The levels of the students are indirectly determined by the books used in the circles and they learn direct from the book (*menadah kitab*)⁸⁹. Thus they do not use teaching aids at the centre. At the most, blackboard and chalks are required, though not many centres have this⁹⁰, because reading books (*menadah kitab*) does not need these things⁹¹. Students, the beginners as well as advanced, are mixed

⁸⁷. According to Faisal, this is the most effective way of protecting oneself from going astray. However, this will only be obtained by the one who is aware of the *ḥaqīqah* of oneself as a creation of God and at the same time he acts as His vicegerent (*khalīfat Allāh*). Faisal Othman, op. cit., p. 16.

⁸⁸. Noor Haliza Nih, op. cit., p. 33.

⁸⁹. See Chapter Three, 3.7.1., p. 205.

⁹⁰. For example, at Pondok Haji Wan Abdul Latif, Besut, a blackboard and chalks were used during teaching. Noor Halizah Nih, op. cit., p. 30.

⁹¹. See the practice of the medieval period of Islam in Chapter Two, 2.6.1., iiv; 2.6.5., p. 145; and the practice at *pondok* in Chapter Four, 4.4., pp. 238-239; 4.4.1., p. 242-243.

together regardless of their level of knowledge. Students should have the ability to select subjects and levels which suit their needs. They are left free to select a *ḥalaqah* on their own. However, new students are encouraged to join senior or advanced students' circles, though they normally do not understand the teaching, to get the *barakah* (blessing) from God⁹². Therefore, it is not surprising that each student attends the same circles several times in order to become more well-versed with the book read by the *tok guru*. Thus the learning process takes a long time to produce an *ʿālim*. Ten years is considered a normal period for a student to learn at the *pondok* centre⁹³. In addition to that, to be a *tok guru* most of them prefer to finish their study at Masjid al-Ḥarām, Mecca for several more years⁹⁴.

This method of teaching had become a subject of condemnation by the young faction, or *iṣlāḥ* group led by Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin. To them, such a method practised at *pondok* was outdated, incompatible with the reality and a cause of backwardness to the Muslims⁹⁵. In order to fulfill their vision, a

⁹². Omar, op. cit., p. 180; ʿUthmān al-Muḥammadī, "Pondok: Benteng yang Masih Kebal", part 2, p. 14.

⁹³. Interview with Tok Guru Haji Husin, 05/06/93. According to Ihsan, the first stage i.e. the process of memorizing basic *naḥw* and *ṣarf* texts and learning *kitab jawi* from *kepala muṭālaʿah* alone would normally take about two and half years of the students' stay at the centre. Ihsan Hardiwijaya Ibaga, op. cit., p. 22. Ibn Khaldūn has criticised this method whereby a student will face hardship in learning all the great number of works with their large variety of technical terminology of instruction (*ikhtilāf al-iṣṭilāḥāt fī al-taʿālīm*), and he would not master all the literature that exists in a single discipline, even if he were to devote his whole lifetime to it. Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., p. 587.

⁹⁴. See discussion about this in Chapter Three, 3.7., pp. 218-220.

⁹⁵. Mohd Sarim Haji Mustajab, op. cit., p. 30.

school by the name of Madrasah al-Iqbāl was set up in Singapore on 21/11/1907 where both the acquired and transmitted sciences were offered⁹⁶. In actual fact it was a secular school where Arabic and Religious subjects were taught as core subjects.

iv. Timetable

There is no proper timetable in teaching. Normally the class starts after each obligatory prayer with the exception of *‘Aṣr*. As such there is no fixed time for the lessons. Everything depends upon the convenience and availability of the *tok guru*. If he has to attend any function outside the centre or has to be away for any other reason, the class will have to be postponed to some other time.

v. Syllabus, Subjects and Textbooks

There is no proper syllabus at the centre. It is in the hands of the individual *tok guru* and thus depends solely on his skill and convenience⁹⁷. Each *tok guru* has his own speciality. However, it revolves around subjects that are considered purely religious, i.e. transmitted sciences⁹⁸. Thus it is

⁹⁶. Mohd Sarim, *ibid.*, p. 40.

⁹⁷. Abdullah Alwi Hassan, *op. cit.*, p. 193.

⁹⁸. Noor Halizah Nih, *op. cit.*, p. 31 and Omar, *op. cit.*, p. 99. For the detailed discussions see lists of books which had been used at *pondok* circles in the past and books that are used at present time in Chapter Four, 4.5. Though Rahim Abdullah and Abdullah Alwi Hassan mention that there were subjects like Geography, Mathematics and other acquired sciences taught at the centre, I very much doubt their nature and quality. Unlike the *madrasah* in medieval Islam, there has never been any time in the history of *pondok* when laboratories and instruments were set up and used in

understood that the acquired sciences will not be offered at the centre due to their non-familiarity with those subjects⁹⁹, since the *tok gurus* had all graduated from the *halaqah* system at Masjid al-Ḥarām at Mecca or at least were Meccan-oriented¹⁰⁰.

As a result of this, the *pondok* inhabitants were left behind in many aspects of life. Blind belief in *taqdīr* caused a great calamity on them. This led them to practise what is called *taqlid buta* (blind acceptance of intermediate authority)¹⁰¹ for their understanding while making no attempt to innovate or create new ideas, or in other words to practise *ijtihād*¹⁰². As a result of this there emerged in the society an *Iṣlāḥ* (reformation) group known as the young faction¹⁰³. According to them all these things were the result of the negligence of both the leaders of the society and the religious teachers¹⁰⁴.

5.8.2. Strengths and Weaknesses in The Methodology of Teaching

i. Fostering a Sense of Brotherhood

teaching. On top of that Rahim and Abdullah Alwi do not list any book related to the acquired sciences learned at the centre.

⁹⁹. Please refer to the discussion in Chapter Four, 4.5., pp. 252-258.

¹⁰⁰. For detailed discussions about this please see Chapter Three, 3.7.2., pp. 218-220.

¹⁰¹. For the discussion see Roff, *Origins*, p. 58.

¹⁰². *ibid.*

¹⁰³. Among other things this group came to counter the idea that religion (*agama*) is for the life in hereafter only. Noor Halizah Nih, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

¹⁰⁴. Mohd Sarim Haji Mustajab, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124.

Halaqah, especially the *‘umūmī*, is the main feature of *pondok* education and it is in fact a nucleus of the system¹⁰⁵. As we have seen before, it aims at producing *‘ulamā’* who act as *dā‘ī*, i.e. those who always struggle for the realization of Islamic teachings¹⁰⁶. The educational life at *pondok* always links knowledge (*‘ilm*) with practice (*‘amal*). Therefore, it has been a norm at *pondok* that *‘ibādah*, whether obligatory prayers and other occasions like *dhikr*, reading the Qur’ān, commendable prayers and *i‘tikāf* are performed at the place where they learn, i.e. *madrasah*, *surau* or *masjid* within the *pondok* courtyard. The five obligatory prayers are performed in congregation while others are left open to the discretion of its inhabitants. This kind of practice helps in fostering the environment of brotherhood at the learning centre as suggested by Islamic teachings.

ii. Mastering Classical Books

The method of teaching practised at *pondok* is very effective in teaching the classical books. It is known to people that these books, especially *fiqh* books, were written in a unique style where words and terms have their own meanings which are different from their common denotation. Sentences are constructed in such a way that they need to be closely studied and probed into. Otherwise, one cannot arrive at the idea intended by the writer. Thus the

¹⁰⁵. Omar, op. cit., p. 178.

¹⁰⁶. See Introductory Chapter, p. 9, 5.10.2. (i)b and note 131.

integrated approach (*uslūb muwaḥḥad*)¹⁰⁷ is very helpful in understanding the books. When the teacher explains the students take meticulous marginal notes. This is known in *pondok* milieu as *dābiṭ*¹⁰⁸. However, teaching is not something static. It is flexible. There have been various types of methods of teaching in the history of Islamic education that are applicable according to different factors such as aims of education, level of teaching, subjects or courses and so on¹⁰⁹. Each methodology of teaching is not suitable and applicable to all subjects and for all levels of understanding.

iii. Monotony in Delivery

The complete reliance on the stereotyped methodology of teaching at *pondok*, i.e. the method of delivery (*ilqā' iyyah*)¹¹⁰ which revolves around reading, translation and explanation or giving commentary, the *ḥalaqah*, is not suitable for all subjects and for all levels. Thus diversifying the methodology of teaching at *pondok* is inevitable in order to avoid students being bored and

¹⁰⁷. This approach is referred to a style where the teacher, apart from translating words (especially Arabic words) and explaining ideas, also gives explanation on other related aspects such as grammar, morphology, rhetoric, the status of pronouns and their reference and so on while his students are jotting down the commentary on the margin or beneath the text. This means that there is no segregation between branches of sciences. See Chapter Four, 4.4., pp. 242-243 and 245. See also Wan Zahidi Wan Teh, op. cit., p. 106 and 114.

¹⁰⁸. Wan Zahidi Wan Teh, op. cit., p. 106; Awang Had Salleh, op. cit., p. p. 41; Omar, op. cit., p. 100. For the detailed discussions see Chapter Four, 4.4., p. 239.

¹⁰⁹. Wan Zahidi Wan Teh, op. cit., p. 114. See discussions on this in Chapter Two, 2.4., pp. 87-88.

¹¹⁰. For the detailed discussions refer to Chapter Two, 2.6.1., pp. 120-128.

to enable them to comprehend subjects more effectively¹¹¹. In order to increase effectiveness of teaching, many a time teaching aids in the form of audio-visual facilities are very helpful especially in teaching subjects known to the *pondok* inhabitants as *ilmu alat*¹¹². The method of *munāẓarah* in whatever forms according to modern terms, be it in the form of debate, disputation or forum, is effective enough in instigating the students to understanding and thought. This method was dominant during the golden days of Islam and many great scholars were known to the masses through this method such as al-Jubbā'ī, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Wāṣil b. 'Aḡā', or the most famous of all al-Ghazālī. Even al-Shāfi'ī used to involve himself in stiff debates with his opponents¹¹³. This method is very helpful in freeing oneself from the

¹¹¹. To me the complete reliance on the methodology of delivery in teaching at *pondok* causes students to be bored just like repetition in teaching, unless it is accompanied with new illustrations and ideas or strong will. See the discussion in Chapter Two, 2.5.2., pp. 109.

¹¹². '*ilmu alat* refers to knowledge of various subjects that become vehicles or tools to understand *ilm shar'ī* (religious subjects/sciences). They are like the sciences of *naḥw*, *ṣarf*, *balāghah* and the like. Interview with Tok Guru Haji Daud Abdul Rahman, 04/05/93. See also Wan Zahidi Wan Teh, *ibid.* p. 106. According to Tok Guru Haji Husin, to master Arabic one needs to get an inspiration (*ilhām*) from God because this subject is difficult and not everyone can be proficient in it and thus not many people can be '*ulamā'*'. Interview with Tok Guru Haji Husin, 05/06/93. I believe that this '*ilmu alat* must have referred to auxiliary sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-ālīyyah*) for they are considered an *ālah* (tool) used in understanding the teachings of Islam or according to Ibn Khaldūn, *al-maqāṣid*, i.e. *al-ʿulūm al-sharʿiyyah*. If a student is to be asked to learn the details of these auxiliary sciences, he will have spent his whole life in it without obtaining the objectives of learning, i.e., to know the *sharʿah*. Ibn Khaldūn, *op. cit.*, p. 593. Due to the stress on these auxiliary sciences, it is not surprising that Tok Guru Haji Husin made the above remark.

¹¹³. See the discussion in Chapter Two, 2.6.4., p. 134; 2.6.5., pp. 144-145, and Chapter Five, 5.3., p. 273-274. Compare this with the practice at *pondok* in Chapter Four, 4.4. especially in 4.4.1., where there has been no such method recorded as a practice at *pondok* milieu.

attitude of *taqlīd*¹¹⁴. According to Ibn Khaldūn, the easiest method of acquiring the scientific habit is through acquiring the ability to express oneself clearly in discussing and disputing (*al-muhāwarah wa al-munāẓarah*) scientific problems¹¹⁵.

5.9. The unpopularity of the *Pondok*

The quality of the present *pondok* products is less satisfactory. This is due to their inactiveness in their societal commitments, and as such they are rejected¹¹⁶. Further they are lost in the new technological developments of which most of them have little knowledge. Thus like their children, parents of the present day prefer their children to attend schools which offer future prospects in life¹¹⁷. The books they read at *pondok*, in comparison to the present school text books, are religious in nature, while no works on scientific and vocational studies are taught¹¹⁸. Despite their reading of the classical

¹¹⁴. See the discussions in Chapter Two, 2.6.4., p. 134, 2.6.5., p. 144. See also the discussion on *taqlīd* and *ijtihād* in relation to methods of reading (*qirā'ah*) and dictation (*imlā'*) in Chapter Two, 2.6.1., vii and viii. See also Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., pp. 478-479 and 588; Roff, *Origins*, p. 58.

¹¹⁵. Ibn Khaldūn, op. cit., p. 478. See also al-Abrāshī, op. cit., p. 192. According to al-Shaybānī, most of the Islamic sciences developed after having gone through this method especially *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *ilm al-kalām*. al-Shaybānī, op. cit., p. 416.

¹¹⁶. See Chapter Five, 5.3., p. 273.

¹¹⁷. Interview with Tok Guru Haji Husin, 05/06/93. To the surprise of the researcher, the Tok Guru himself prefers the government system for producing workers for the nation building instead of the *pondok* system. To him the *pondok* system takes a long time and thus needs perseverance, patience and strong commitment. To use his words, "belajar di pondok lambat pandai" which means that it is difficult to become knowledgeable studying at *pondok*.

¹¹⁸. For the nature of books used at *pondok* institutions please refer to the discussions on subjects and textbooks in Chapter Four, 4.5 and Chapter Five, 5.4. Though Abdullah Alwi Hasan and Rahim Abdullah mention the subjects of al-Handasah (Geometry), al-Ḥisāb (mathematics), al-Jughrāfiya (Geography) and al-Ṭibb (medicine), we do not know for sure the nature of the subjects

works in the past, most of the present *pondoks* limit their teaching to Malay texts i.e. *kitab jawi*¹¹⁹. Thus, lessons from classical and authoritative texts are very rarely read at *pondok*¹²⁰. Moreover, the majority of the *pondok* pupils are either dropouts from the government schools who are less competent than their counterparts at the government schools or consist of children from less fortunate families in the hinterland or the villages¹²¹.

5.10. Call for Changes : A Proposed Model *Pondok*

In the course of our discussion, we have enumerated the difficulties encountered by the *pondok* institutions as a whole. There is a great need for reform and restructuring. These changes should be carried out in all aspects which are related to upgrading and facilitating the methodology of teaching at the centre. However, in these following pages, the researcher intends to restrict himself to proposing the changes required in order to keep alive the

for the books are not available to us, especially on medicine. To my surprise, Rahim Abdullah who did some research in 1973 on whose account Abdullah Alwi relies on does not mention a single book on these four subjects. No doubt that there are books on Islamic medicine such as *al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī* by Ibn al-Qayyim, but perhaps the medicine here refers to the practices of the older generation in using herbal remedies and reciting portions of *duʿā* asking help from God. For the subjects and books refer to Abdullah Alwi Hasan, op. cit., p. 194 and Rahim Abdullah, op. cit., pp. 14-17.

¹¹⁹. For example, at Pondok Amir, Besut, Arabic books are considered references for the *Tok Guru* and he teaches Arabic books to a very few selected students of his. Interview with Tok Guru Haji Husin, 05/06/93. Please refer to the lists of books used at this *pondok* in Chapter Four, 4.5., p. 253.

¹²⁰. At Pondok Pasir Tumbuh or Madrasah al-Bakriyyah al-Dīniyyah, reading Arabic books is still popular though it is not as popular as in the past. Information from Muhammad Suhaimi @ Hasbullah Daud (the eldest son of Tok Guru Daud Abdul Rahman, Dungun, Terengganu), one of the former *kepala muṭālaʿahs* at the *Pondok*. Discussion with him in February 1992 at Kampong Gelugor Che Hassan, Kuala Terengganu before he left for al-Azhar University, Egypt.

¹²¹. Omar, op. cit., pp. 168-169.

traditional institution in the modern world by making it more palatable to the modern taste.

Even though a number of writers have written on the *pondok* and its reformation, the researcher feels that, despite their many scholarly attempts, none of them has proposed an overall change in the *pondok* institution in this particular respect, the methodology of teaching. The following table indicates the main writings on this subject.

Table

YEAR	WRITER	TITLE	AREA OF PROPOSED CHANGE
1984	Shafie Abu Bakar	Ke Arah Pembaikan dan Pengembangan Sistem Pendidikan Pondok di Malaysia (Suatu Penyesuaian dengan Perkembangan Pendidikan Kini); (Towards the Reformation and Development of the <i>Pondok</i> (Educational System in Malaysia an Adaptation to the present Educational Development))	The work proposes brief suggestions on restructuring the system of <i>pondok</i> by classifying it into two streams: a. That which adopts the government educational system similar to that of the Arabic schools. b. <i>Tafaquh</i> class, which is more or less the same as the <i>Umumi</i> system where the timetable should be flexible and the student is free to attend any <i>halaquh</i> he wishes without the approval of the teacher concerned.

1986	Abdul Latif Hamidong	Institusi Pondok dalam Tradisi Budaya Ilmu (The <i>Pondok</i> Institution in the Tradition of Intellectual Culture)	The writer proposes to create a modern <i>Pondok</i> by bringing the existing <i>Pondoks</i> in line with <i>madrasahs</i> or Arabic schools. By right this is another form of religious school (<i>Sekolah agama</i>)
1990	Ismail Haji Ishak	Malay and Islamic Traditional Educational System from the Mid 19th Century to the present day with the special reference to the <i>Pondok</i> Schools in Kedah.	The writer suggests in the curriculum with a strong traditional bent. His suggestion is mainly based on Shafie's proposals.
1992	Wan Zahidi Wan Teh	Pengemaskinian Sistem Pengajian Pondok di Pulau Pinang (Updating the <i>Pondok</i> Educational System in Pulau Pinang).	The writer gives brief ideas on the aspects which are related to the process of reformation as follows: a. To set up <i>tafaqquh</i> centres which focus on <i>fiqh</i> subject. b. To reinforce duo-systems at present Religious Schools. c. To reward <i>pondok</i> teachers with special allowance.

A study of the above works will indicate to the reader that so far no one has attempted to bring about a comprehensive reformation in the *pondok* system and in particular in the methodology of teaching. Thus, this thesis will attempt to put forward suggestions to the concerned authorities to upgrade the traditional educational system within the following framework:

- i. Changes in *pondok* physical structure
- ii. Changes in *pondok* curriculum

5.10.1. Changes in *Pondok* Physical Structure

We saw in our earlier discussion that the *pondok* of the past had limited facilities which suited the need of the past. However, these facilities do not meet the requirements of the present time. Therefore, the researcher proposes that a model *pondok* should have:

- i. Library¹²²
- ii. Common kitchen and Laundry (separate arrangement for male and female).
- iii. Teacher and student accomodation
- iv. Student activity centre
- v. Business premises¹²³
- vi. Vocational and training activity¹²⁴

¹²². Books and references are very important in any learning institution. There were great libraries during the golden days of Islam which contained millions of books. Bayt al-Ḥikmah was built by al-Ma'mūn in Baghdad in 215/830. Dār al-Ḥikmah was built by al-Ḥākim, a Fatimid Caliph, in 395/1005 in Cairo. Scholars like Ibn Jamā'ah al-Kinānī and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī wrote books and treatises about the importance of books and how to deal with them. Dodge, op. cit., p. 15; Tibawi, "Muslim Education", p. 434; Shushtery, op. cit., p. 166; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Taqyīd al-ʿIlm*, p. 117; Ibn Jamā'ah al-Kinānī, op. cit., 163.

¹²³. Business is an essential part of human life, without which life will be halted. The Prophet encouraged people to do business and he himself was a businessman and undertook business caravans to Syria before he was appointed as the Messenger. Many of his great Companions were businessmen and entrepreneurs. They include Abū Bakr, ʿUthmān and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf. The word *tijārah* has been mentioned couple of times in the Qurʾān, to inspire people to do business. The prophetic tradition which says *tiṣʿat al-rizq min al-tijārah* gives the same encouragement.

¹²⁴. This activity was observed very keenly by Muslims during the heyday of Islam. They produced earthenware, leather products, wove rugs and carpets, manufactured paper and gunpowder, maintained a merchant marine of thousands of ships and many other things. This aspect of vocational expertise and scientific research is a part of Islamic civilization that is too good to be missed by the so-called Islamic propagators at *pondok* centres. See Nakosteen, op. cit., p. 42 and Chapter VII of Shushtery. As for scientific fields see Shushtery, op. cit., pp. 173-194. See also footnote 6 in Introductory Chapter, 2. as mentioned by Nakosteen.

vii. Sound administration¹²⁵

viii. Teaching facilities¹²⁶

ix. Public activities¹²⁷

These have been indicated in the model structure in Appendix B.

5.10.2. Changes in *Pondok* Curriculum

In calling for a change in curriculum, we are not going to prescribe full details of such revision. Instead, we would like to confine our suggestions to:

i. Syllabus:

a. Textbooks

The textbooks are very important in the pursuit of knowledge. They are closely connected with the methods of teaching and the syllabus is in a way the textbooks¹²⁸. In the case of the *pondok* institution the textbooks must be both classical and current on subjects related to current issues. Otherwise

¹²⁵. On many occasions God instructs Muslims to be organised in their actions as in *sūrat al-Nūr* (24):58. Even He guides them in manners pertaining to socialization between different sexes and ages. In several situations even children are not allowed to interfere with the free time of adults in their private room. Thus, there must be partitions (*hijāb*), or curtains (*sutūr*), rooms in our case, in Muslim houses in order to avoid the occurrence of bad manners. See Ibn Kathīr, op. cit., 3:333, 334 in explaining *sūrat al-Nūr* (24):58. The Muslim must be, as explained by Ḥasan al-Bannā, the founder and the first *Murshid al-ʿām* of the Muslim Brethren, well-organised in his manners and work (*munazzaman fī shuʿūnih*).

¹²⁶. Refer to the discussion of the importance of the various forms of teaching aids in ʿAbdul-Raḥmān Ṣāliḥ ʿAbdullāh's book, *Educational Theory: A Qurʾānic Outlook*, p. 185. See also *sūrat al-Mā'idah* (5):34.

¹²⁷. Many verses of the Qurʾān urge people to build good relationship among them and to help each other in whatever form and to be patient in upholding praiseworthy traits. The most outstanding example is *sūrat al-Aṣr* (103). According to Sayyid Quṭb, though this *sūrah* is short, in terms of contents and ideas it covers all aspects of Islamic life according to Divine rules (*al-dustūr al-Ilāhī*). See Quṭb, op. cit., 6:3964, 3971.

¹²⁸. Tibawi, *Islamic Education*, p. 213.

students would be passive in this rapidly changing world for their knowledge would not have been updated to the life in which they live. Students are to be introduced to their first attempt at *pondok* with simplified books written according to a new approach, after which classical books will follow. Memorization of the texts is not to be over-emphasized for students except for certain formulae which are necessary. For instance *Mabāḥith fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān* by Ṣubḥī Ṣāliḥ could be introduced at first instead of *al-Itqān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān* by al-Suyūṭī and al-Zarkashī’s *al-Burḥān fī ‘Ulūm al-Qur’ān* etc.

b. Subjects Taught.

Subjects taught at *pondok* institutions must not represent the "pure religious" only but they should focus on both religious-theoretical and vocational-practical. Subjects taught at mosques in the early days of Islam were not limited to the purely religious alone but also included theology, language, poetry, medicine and the like¹²⁹. However, we find that *pondok* institutions introduce the religious subjects which their teachers inherited especially from the Meccan circles such as *fiqh*, *tawḥīd*, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *taṣawwuf* and the like¹³⁰. Teaching these "religious subjects" (pelajaran Agama/Agama) *per se* would contribute to shaping the mind of the students towards the life of the ascetic (*zuhd*) and good attitudes and conducts, which in the Malay milieu is known

¹²⁹. Shalaby, *al-Tarbiyah wa al-Ta’līm*, p. 115.

¹³⁰. For the details of subjects taught at *pondok* institutions and books used at the *pondok* milieu see the lists of the books used at the centre in Chapter Four. 4.5., pp. 253-258.

as "perangai lebai" (*lebai* behaviour)¹³¹. Subjects which are not related to these fields are considered not suitable to Muslims for they are outside the Islamic field¹³². Thus, according to Faisal, the students who study at *pondok* centres as well as their graduates are not competent to tackle the ever-growing problems and issues of the present day¹³³.

c. Evaluation

Students should be evaluated from time to time. There must be a mechanism of evaluation at the *pondok* centre so that the students can be distinguished according to their achievement. The system of giving *ijāzah* as practised by the *madrasah* system in medieval period of Islam can be maintained but it must be treated as a testimonial letter. A standard mechanism is vital at the institution. Otherwise, *pondok* graduates will be deprived of the opportunity to continue their studies, be it abroad or at the local level, or they will be denied the opportunity to play an active role in any national development. An examination process is badly needed if the system would like to be recognized by the authorities. It can be applied along with the informal mechanisms such as teachers' observations on spiritual activities and

¹³¹. Often, the term *lebai* is used to refer to the born loser. For example, the famous fable of unfortunate person in Malay society is entitled *Lebai Malang*. Contrary to that, however *Lebai* is actually an epithet given to a person who is always prepared to sacrifice his knowledge and service to the society not in the hope of worldly return but for the reward in the hereafter. For detailed discussion on this, see Wan Zahidi Wan Teh, op. cit., p. 110, 116.

¹³². Faisal Othman, op. cit., *JPI*, p. 11. See also Dodge, op. cit., p. 31-64.

¹³³. Faisal, *ibid.*, pp. 10-11. See also the discussion in 5.9.

performance in co-curriculum activities. One of the main factors for the inability of *pondok* institutions to maintain their survival in society was the lack of recognition by the government of their graduates, while at the same time they were unable to compete with the secular schools established by the government¹³⁴.

ii. Methodology:

Methodology of teaching plays an important part in shaping students' behaviour and ways of thought. It varies from one teacher to another. Though we have a full range of theories and practices of methodology of teaching¹³⁵, nonetheless it is a matter of individual selection¹³⁶.

a. *Halaqah*

As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, the open *halaqah* (*‘umūmī* system) is considered the nucleus of the *pondok* system in terms of methodology of teaching¹³⁷. It is so important in the educational process at the *pondok* because it is considered a system as well as a method of teaching¹³⁸. This method of teaching was inherited from the time of the

¹³⁴. *ibid.*, p. 10.

¹³⁵. Please refer to Chapter Two, 2.4., pp. 87-88. The varieties are classified into eleven groups according to their elements.

¹³⁶. A. Sofie Roald, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

¹³⁷. For the detailed discussion please refer to Chapter Four, 4.2.3., p. 228.

¹³⁸. Refer to Chapter Two, 2.6.5., pp. 137-138 and 145; Chapter Four, 4.2., p. 223.

Prophet Muḥammad. Throughout the history of Muslim education, this pattern has remained unchanged. There should not be any harm in maintaining this method, but nevertheless, subjects taught at this institution should be in accordance with the needs of a particular society. For instance, in the time of the Prophet and the Companions, most of the time, *ḥalaqah* sessions were full of discussions related to Qur'ānic matters, hadith and discussions pertaining to measures for disseminating knowledge and developing the newly established Islamic state. During the time of early Medieval Islam integrated subjects (i.e. religious and vocational) were included in *madrasahs*¹³⁹. Thus, the *pondok* institution must reflect an environment where their graduates are active and able to contribute to the development of the nation¹⁴⁰.

b. Induction

During the time of the Prophet, there was no problem faced by the people, since he was there to answer their queries, doubts and questions regarding religion. The Companions who came after him were also serving a similar purpose in areas where they were settled. They became the resource persons in knowledge and opinion¹⁴¹. People from all walks of life went to them for guidance and clarification pertaining to problems they faced. The

¹³⁹. Their graduates were active in building up the nation. See note 124 above.

¹⁴⁰. Nakosteen, op. cit, p. 42.

¹⁴¹. For Example, Mu'adh b. Jabal in Palestine, 'Ubadah b. al-Ṣāmit in Ḥimṣ, Abū Dardā' in Damascus and 'Amr b. al-ʿAṣ in Egypt. Please refer to Chapter One, 1.5., p. 75.

Companions were followed by generations of scholars who acted as centres of consultation and reference. As the Islamic world began to put thoughts and narrations into writing, many centres of books in the form of libraries emerged. Thus there were Dār al-Ḥikmah established by the Shīʿites in Cairo in 395/1005 while in Baghdād a similar centre was established under the name of Bayt al-Ḥikmah by al-Rashīd and his son al-Maʾmūn. Even the scholars had their own libraries of personal collections. Their commitment to knowledge and their procurement of books were such that people built libraries for the benefit of their fellow men, thereby creating a literate egalitarian society¹⁴².

Since this had been the practice of the scholars, the researcher feels that the students should be given a chance to consult books. For this they should be first given training in research methodology and each of them should be given assignments in the chosen subject according to selected themes so that they will make full use of the works in the library to their benefit. This method is found lacking in many of the *pondoks*, where it is a rarity to find students consulting or referring to books. This trend should change. This method will enable the students to probe into new pieces of evidence, and thereby enhance their research potential, which in turn will encourage them to study religion and related issues in a more academic and mature way. This is exactly what Haji Nik Abdullah Wan Musa wanted to do with his students but he passed

¹⁴². See note 122 above.

away very shortly after he arrived in Kelantan¹⁴³.

c. Question and Answer and Disputation

As we have seen earlier, in the existing *pondoks*, asking questions and disputing with the *gurus* is considered taboo¹⁴⁴. This aspect of the *pondok* life is somewhat against the Islamic and Qur'ānic teachings. We can read in the Qur'ān, that at various places God has exhorted the believers to ask those who know¹⁴⁵. Even though some scholars, including al-Ghazālī, are not in favour of *jadāl*, they made full use of it during their own days. Thus the researcher is of the view that the inclusion of this in the methodology of teaching and encouragement of students to ask questions to their *gurus* will widen the knowledge of both the *gurus* and students. The stance of some *pondoks* in this respect is rather unsatisfactory. This attitude is one of the criticisms levelled against such institutions and has led critical-minded people to look down on their merits. Since knowledge is a two-way communication and the worth of a teacher is known through the worth of the student, it is of paramount interest that such mechanisms should be ardently promoted.

However, strict care should be observed that the students should commit themselves to observing good manners with their *gurus* in times of

¹⁴³. Please refer to 5.3., p. 268 and note 17.

¹⁴⁴. Rahim, op. cit., p. 6. See also 5.3., p. 269.

¹⁴⁵. For instance in *sūrat al-Naḥl* (16):43 God says "*fa is'alū ahl al-dhikr in kuntum lā ta'lamūn*".

any disputes. It should be noted that disputes should not be conducted for the sake of dispute. That is itself bad manners. There must be a genuine need for having such a dispute. Nevertheless, to prohibit dispute per se would do nothing to enrich the quality of studies and knowledge. The model *pondok* should give due consideration to the development and refinement of the arts of discussion and disputes, by conducting regular question and answer sessions. This will create a good rapport between the *gurus* and their students.

d. Story-Telling

Story-telling as a method of teaching is very rare in the present day *pondok*. Through telling a story the *guru* could convey certain moral lessons to the students. In fact the life and achievements of the pious savants of Islam should be narrated as stories so that the students of Islam could emulate them in their pursuit of knowledge and in the conduct of their lives. Moreover, lessons from Islamic history should also be narrated through stories. It is indeed a norm in *pondok* and *madrasah* that the historic event of the *Isrā'* and *Mī'rāj* of the Prophet Muḥammad is read to the students in commemoration of it when the time comes. Other events such as *Mawlid al-Rasūl* are also celebrated in this way¹⁴⁶. Thus there should not be any problem of introducing the method of telling stories at *pondok* for it is an expansion of its norms and practices.

¹⁴⁶. For the details please refer to Chapter Three, 3.7.1. iii, p. 208.

In this way the students will be able to retain the underlying moral lessons of these stories in their minds. This might be very useful in moulding the characters of the students. The model *pondok* should give due consideration to this element. After all the Qur'ān itself is full of stories from which we can gain lessons.

e. Demonstrations and Projects.

Since knowledge does not come through texts alone, it is essential to train the students of the *pondok* to acquire knowledge through projects and demonstrations¹⁴⁷. The aim of the *pondok* should be not only to focus on producing religious personalities; it should also aim at bringing out such personalities who are capable of standing on their own feet to serve Islam rather than being dependant on others even for their own livelihood.

In this regard the *pondok* students should be trained in other subjects and activities, such as vocational, agricultural and business training. In this way they will learn to be independent, rather than being a burden to society and being despised by the donating public. To achieve this end, the model *pondok* should have facilities and personalities to conduct such activities which run concurrently with the religious syllabus. In this way the *pondok* could take part in the creation of God-fearing businessmen and workers at various

¹⁴⁷. See note 124 above.

levels. Moreover, this would indicate that religiously trained scholars are also capable of running any enterprise and are not excluded from wider social activities just because they are religiously trained. This model *pondok* should strive to bring out dynamic personalities who are capable of investing equally in both religious and mundane activities and obligations.

5.11. Conclusion

There is no better way to understand the strengths and the weaknesses of any institutions of learning than by looking at their curriculum. In the past, it is perhaps necessary to say that all *pondoks* had in terms of their curriculum was the textbooks, syllabus and methodology of teaching that relied solely on individual *pondok* masters. However, with the emergence of religious schools, *pondoks* had to compete with the rapid development and popularity of the former by incorporating several changes, such as introducing new subjects like calligraphy and agricultural projects. In extreme cases some such institutions had completely changed into the school pattern in order to regain their popularity. Now that this dilemma has been recognised it is high time for the *pondok* institutions, if they want to retain their strength in the modern day, to reform the nature of their educational life to suit the challenges of the present day, in accordance with the Qur'ānic teachings as practised in the early stage of *madrasahs* during heyday of Islam as mentioned in 5.10. above.

CONCLUSION.

Islam was brought into the life of the Malays at a time when the influence of Hinduism was still strong. With the decline of the Majapahit empire in the fourteenth century, Islam grew to be an important element in developing the Malays and resulted in the establishment of the Malay Muslim states in the region, especially in Malacca. Although the actual date of the spread of Islam in the Malay Peninsula is a very complex matter and the question of where it came from is still a subject of dispute among scholars, we have enough reasons to say that Islam had put down its roots in the Malay Peninsula by the thirteenth century. The turning point was the conversion of the rulers in the region followed by its acceptance by their subjects. As a consequence, they gradually changed their characteristics and patterns of life and took on a different image, culturally and politically.

The development of Islam in Malay society was rather slow. As regards their daily life, a mixture of Islam and Hinduism was widely practised until recently by the Malays even in the so-called religious festivals, let alone social gatherings. In order to overcome this problem *ulamā'* have tried their best to inculcate Islamic values in the society and to spread its teachings among them. Some of them established Qur'ān classes at their homes, some taught people at *musallas* or mosques, and some others who had out-of-town students established the religious learning institution which is popularly known as

pondok; a traditional religious school. The names of some centres are prefixed by the word *madrasah*, a term used for a more systematized modern religious school. Initially the ‘*ulamā*’ were locally trained. Those who were more zealous in the acquisition of knowledge travelled abroad to famous religious educational centres such as Patani, and several parts of Sumatra. The more able of them went to Mecca and Madina to deepen their religious knowledge after having performed their pilgrimage obligation. Travel in the quest of knowledge is considered a *jihād*, and one would not be reckoned to have entered the ranks of the ‘*ulamā*’ if prior to his teaching activity, he had not gone through the hardship of travelling in pursuit of knowledge (*al-riḥlah fī ṭalab al-‘ilm*) which was a peculiar feature of becoming knowledgeable in Medieval Islam. At a considerably later time a few of these *ulamā*’ had gone to al-Azhar University in Egypt. A number of them were strongly influenced by Muhammad Abduh’s reformatory ideas. Those who adhered to Abduh’s teachings were grouped together as *Kaum Muda* (young faction), the founders of the *madrasah* institution, as opposed to the *Kaum Tua* (old faction), the founders of the *pondok* institution. The clash between the two factions affected the popularity of the *pondok* system in many ways.

With an increasing number of pilgrims and of religious scholars and progressive-minded graduates of *pondok* institutions as well as of al-Azhar University, a religious reformation eventually took place in the Malay Peninsula.

The influence of the *pondok* institution apparently deteriorated after the independence of the Malay Peninsula. Nonetheless, the trend of decline and loss of power apparently started long before, with the people's acceptance of the modern *madrasah* which offered them more economic value and educational prospects in their life. Consequently, some of the *pondok* institutions had to close down, while some others managed to survive by aligning their system with the *madrasah*. Others which were fortunate enough retained the traditional life since they had great support from the masses. This phenomenon can easily be found in areas where Islamic teachings are dominant viz. in the northern part or on the east coast of the Peninsula. They are not much influenced by the idea of development and industrialization, though they might grasp whatever opportunities they have, and people have perhaps less concern with mundane life.

The aim of education in Islam is to produce a good Muslim, who will exercise his human goodness in his life and discharge his duties in the society naturally while developing his potentialities in response to future problems and challenges. In other words *akhlāq* is a pivot of Islamic education and its essence, without which the whole of its structure would collapse. Islam thus, from the very beginning, emphasizes that the faithful should gain the spiritual life of the Qur'ān, to keep them on the correct track and to lead them to the life of a *muttaqī* and a *mukhlis*. Having this in mind, it aims at a balanced growth of the human being, physically and spiritually. Certainly this process

can only be arrived at by undergoing a proper training. In order to materialize this, Islamic educationists, from the very beginning, created a specific and conducive atmosphere for the learners of Islamic knowledge, be it in their houses, in the prayer halls, in the mosques or any institutionalized educational centres such as *kuttāb* and *madrasahs*.

The Prophet received the revelation from his God *via* Gabriel. He instilled not only the contents of the revelation but also the method of teaching. The generation after the Prophet continued with his method of teaching for it was considered a *sunnah*. To some of them attempts to change it would be considered an innovation or *bid'ah* in religion. However when the Muslims emerged from the cradle of Arabia and came into contact with areas of the outside world which were totally different in their faith and cultures, they found themselves in difficulties in solving the new problems they were facing. They had to modify their style and pattern of thinking and thus, in the educational field, they gradually employed a new methodology in achieving the aims of Islamic education. The methods might vary from one region to another as mentioned by Ibn Khaldun but the aim remained unchanged. Memorization was a very important tool for acquiring knowledge in both early and Medieval Islam. Gabriel read the Qur'ān to the Prophet so that the latter uttered the words exactly as they had been pronounced by the former. The Prophet not only had to memorize it but also to understand the meaning of the revelation. Understanding and observing the ideas and practising the

teachings were the most important. Writing materials were available but writing was not strongly encouraged at the beginning. This pattern of learning Islam, i.e. the Qur'ān and the hadith, was followed until the Muslims met with other civilizations. Then teaching by writing and demonstration by the teachers, especially on the basic rituals of Islam, and other new techniques were employed. The *kuttāb*, a special class for children, introduced the system whereby the subjects were grouped together in order to facilitate understanding and the memorizing of the Qur'ān. Though they might vary from one place to another, the lessons taught were almost the same. The preference in developing the skill of understanding might vary but the understanding and implementation of the Qur'ān was eventually their aim. Other new subjects such as arithmetic, calligraphy and Arabic grammar were to accelerate their understanding of the Qur'ān. The *madrasahs* went further in devising teaching methods. All methods of teaching which they thought to be in line with the spirit of Islam were utilised. However, the method depended much upon the subjects taught. Thus, a professor of *fiqh* might use a method which was ignored by a professor of logic. A master of hadith might prefer the method of memorization to the method of drilling observed by an art teacher and so on. Question and answer sessions might be left aside by a non-skilled and inexperienced teacher while a well trained professor might fully utilise them.

Having understood that the Qur'ān does not specify the exact nature of

the methodology of teaching as elucidated in Chapter Two, 2.5., the *‘ulamā’* felt very content with their discoveries, as enumerated in 2.6., which gave them room to adjust their patterns of teaching. What they are asked to do is to teach their students in such a way that it may lead them to acknowledge the existence and the greatness of God in their lives and thus producing *insān ṣāliḥ*. Therefore they would not do anything which is against the teachings of their religion, the bases of which are the Qur’ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. In other words they are self-motivated.

Whatever method is applied by a teacher to arrive at the intended objective of any lesson, it is actually a matter of his own preference. He knows best the nature of the subject taught as well as the nature of his students. If he is an experienced teacher, he needs no assistance. He may select elements from different methods of teaching and merge them together to produce a new method. In order to aid the learning process the teacher may either involve himself directly in the process or act as a facilitator to his students. However, when it comes to a theoretical matter he needs to explain it to the students, and nothing much can be shared together. What the Qur’ān suggests about the methodology of teaching is actually the basis or the general conception which needs to be adapted to the subject taught. The problem is the way the Qur’an is taught by traditional teachers, not the spirit of the Qur’ān.

The process of education provided at the *pondok* institution was and is still traditional. Memorization is the most important element of learning at the *pondok*. Actually, a *pondok* centre, though sometimes it may have a board of trustees, is run by its *Tok Guru* alone. This one-man-show administration of the *pondok* is usual because the *pondok's* life and its development rely solely on him. His reputation makes the *pondok* popular. His fame that has spread far and near causes people to attend his circle at the *pondok*. Once the *Tok Guru* is dead or no longer active in teaching, the *pondok's* future will be at stake. It will subsequently either cease to exist and have to close down, or gradually lose its students to another centre, unless the *Tok Guru* has earlier prepared his successor, be he his own son or his son-in-law who was normally his brilliant student. The successor, upon the death of the former, will continue teaching at his *pondok* and will adopt the same pattern of teaching as his predecessor. Memorization is still the most important element. Daily life proves to be a part of the living training at the *pondok*. The one and only method of teaching which is popular with the majority of the *pondok* teachers is reading a book. The teacher will read everything from the first page to the end of the book. Explanation will be given after reading certain portions of a specific page where he feels it necessary. If the book is an Arabic text he may give a Malay rendering of the difficult words. We find that it is very rare in this system for a student to be given opportunities to question the *Tok Guru* should he face problems in understanding the latter's explanation, let alone have a proper discussion over certain points that he does not agree with. The most he can do

is to discuss it with the assistant teachers. Otherwise, he has no other choice but to get it explained by the *Kepala Muṭāla'ah*, one of his senior colleagues. However, a number of *Tok Gurus* are prepared to have discussions with their students during the lesson, though this is rare indeed if the *Tok Guru* reads from his own memory. In the history of the *pondok* it is said that only Tok Guru Haji Muhamad Yusuf of Kenali, well known as Tok Kenali, had demonstrated this style, for he memorized everything. He is the legend of the *pondok* system in Kelantan particularly.

Unlike the *madrasah*, the *pondok* has no proper classes. All formal teaching activities are held in the *ḥalaqah*. One can wander around between *ḥalaqahs* as one wishes. Seniors and newcomers are alike. Though the word *ḥalaqah* initially referred to a pattern of sitting of a group of people, it later became and appears now to be an image of a series of teaching activities starting with reading a *kitāb*, rendering the meaning into Malay of difficult Arabic words and explanation of ambiguities by the teacher while students make *qābit*, i.e. noting down the teacher's explanation on the margin of their books. At times a small question and answer session between *Tok Guru* and students takes place at the end of the session. Thus the *ḥalaqah* as a tool of the teaching and learning process, together with memorization on the part of the students, is truly traditional and the essence of the *pondok* system. Any reformative ideas for changing or replacing this system are normally considered an encroachment on the system and those who strongly adhere to

it would normally reject it at whatever cost.

This stereotyped methodology of teaching at the *pondok* has been a subject of criticism by modern educationists. Those who do not agree with the *pondok* system accuse the system of being rigid, backward and barren. It is said that the system does not take into account new developments and new discoveries in the educational field. Thus, it is a left-over microcosm which is lacking in all facilities while it is surrounded by urban life and new technologies. It is true to say that this society, in a way, at the present time is sometimes alien to its own people.

The system at the *pondok* will only remain workable as long as the students want to continue learning and living there. Doubt is now surrounding the *pondok* life, especially as related to student's future life. The obvious weakness in the system is that it cannot create a situation where students are given enough opportunity to exercise their potentialities and skills to face the reality in years to come, and does not provide ways to acquire these skills. If any *pondok* authorities were to give any considerable attention to this aspect in addition to their regular religious activities, coupled with proper management, there would be no reason why people would turn away from them and put them in the plight of having to close down or be eroded by the advancement of technology.

The positive aspects of refining the soul and upgrading *akhlāq* are indeed assets of the *pondok* institution which people cannot find elsewhere. Thus, to bring about a peaceful and harmonious society, *pondok* education with some reforms as enumerated in Chapter Five, 5.10. would be a good training ground, and for this reason it should continue to be a part of society.

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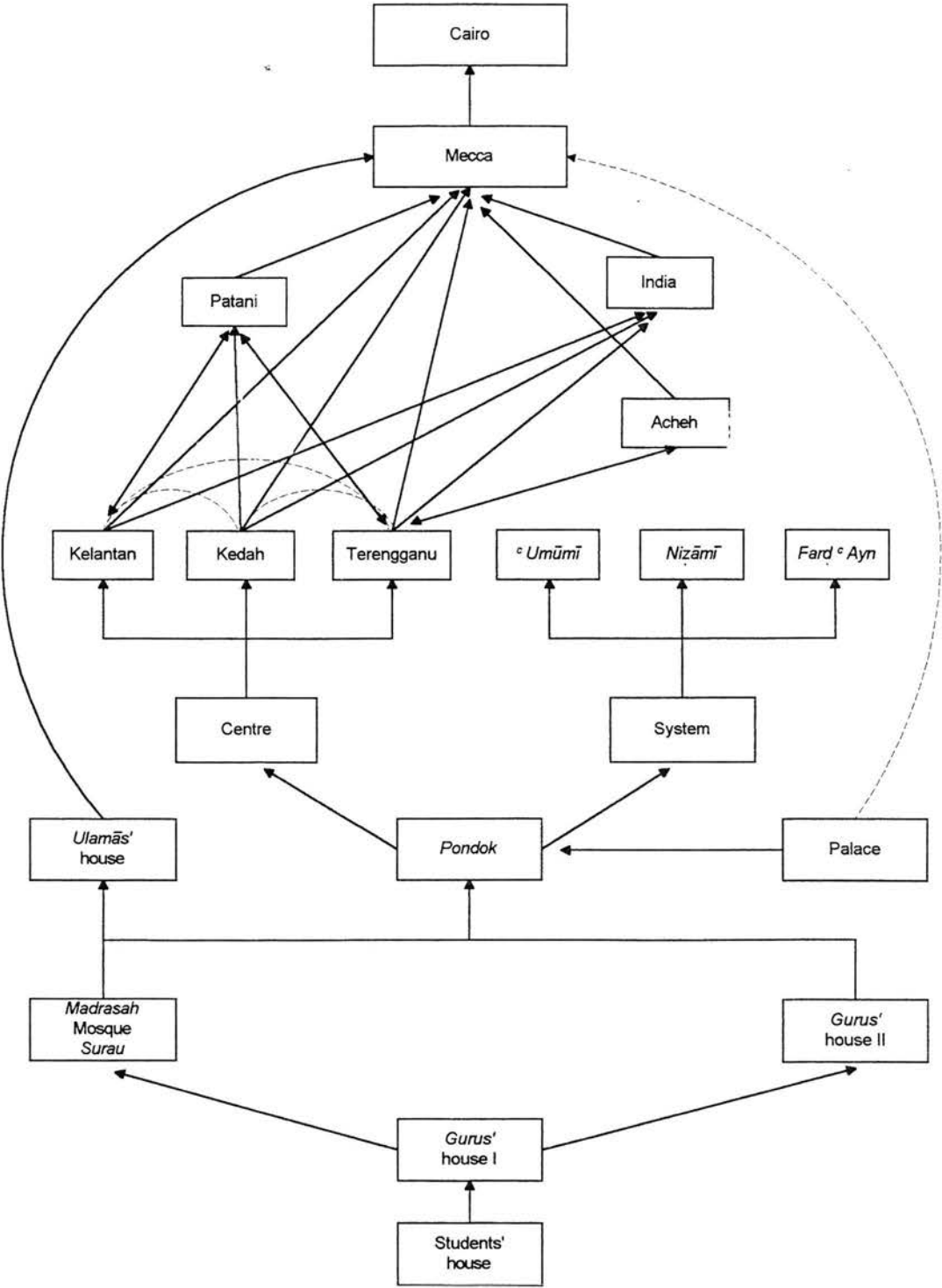
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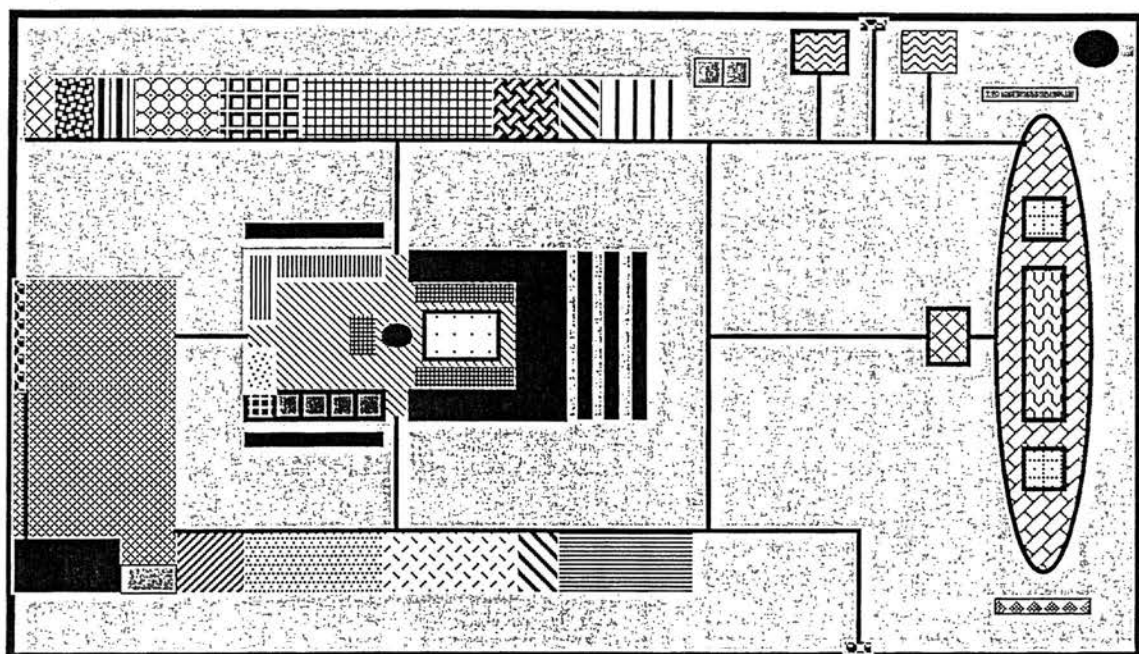
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Traditional System and the Mobility of Students

A Proposed Model *Pondok*

Key

Gates

Parking Space

Shops and Restaurants

Decorative Plants

Flower Hedges

Guest House

Teachers' Quarters

Female and Family Students' Accommodation

Stores

Vocational Training Centres

Reception

Medical Dispensary

Postal Facility

Cemented Courtyard

 House of the *Tok Guru*

Students Activity Centre

Male Students' Accommodation

Kitchen and Laundry

Swimming Pool and Public Bath

Madrasah Court Yard

Lecture Rooms

Lecture Halls and Conference Rooms

Teachers' Rooms

Administrative Office

Tok Guru's Room

Library

Mosque

Small Factories

 A Model *Pondok* Compound

Garage and Workshop

Horse Stables

Children Playground

Fountain

Water Tank

Foot Path / Lane

Playing Courts

Riyadah Field

Outdoor Facilities Store

Equestrian Ground

Appendix C

INTERVIEWEES

1. Haji Mustafa Mohd. Isa, Senior Lecturer, University of Science Malaysia, Penang, 25/04/1993.
2. Tok Guru Haji Daud Abdul Rahman of Madrasah Balai Besar, Dungun, Terengganu, 04/05/1993.
3. Tok Guru Haji Muhammad b. Muhammad Nuh (Haji Mat Pulau) of Losong Atap Zin, Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu, 04/05/1993.
4. Tok Guru Haji Husin (Pak Su Husin) of Pondok Amir, Besut, Terengganu, 05/06/1993.
5. Tok Guru Haji Najmuddin Muhammad of Pondok Moden Kerandang, Besut, Terengganu, 05/06/1993.

CONSULTED OPINIONS

1. Asoc. Prof. Muhammad Abu Bakar, Dept. of History, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

2. Dato' Haji Muhammad Zubir Haji Awang, Deputy *Muftī* of Terengganu.
3. Haji Wan Ahmad Long, former *Imām* of Masjid Intan Zaharah (Dungun District Mosque), Terengganu.
4. Haji Muhammad Ngah, *Imām* of Masjid Gelugor Haji Tahir, Kuala Terengganu.